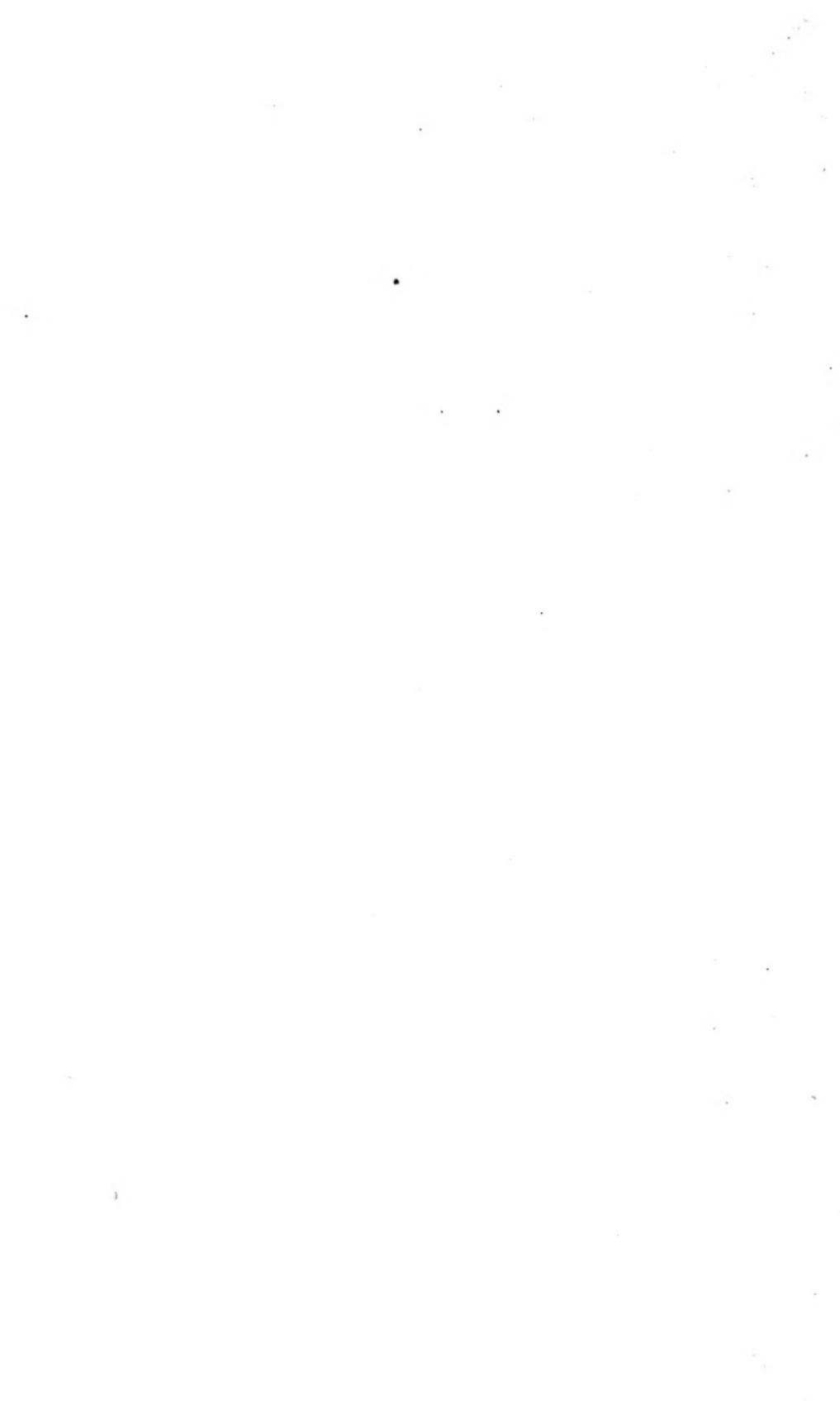


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# B E R T H A.

A ROMANCE OF THE DARK AGES.

BY

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# B E R T H A.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON.

WITHIN the high walls that then constituted the fortifications of Frankfort, there lay several mansions that belonged to princely families, and which, for the security of the treasures they contained, as well as for the safety of those who dwelt within them, were as strongly built, and as

carefully guarded, as if each were itself a fortress. Such was the custom of the times, and, but too frequently, that custom was made subservient to the worst of purposes ; for those city fortresses were often used as the refuge places of the vilest malefactors—of wicked nobles who purchased from the king the permission to indulge in crime, by being themselves the ready instruments of his vices.

The fortress of Frauenstein, which the reader is now invited to enter, was not devoted to any evil object. It was a portion of the wealth conveyed to Count Dedi by his marriage with Adela ; and, as long as it had been the property of its ancient possessors and its new occupant, it was known only to the citizens of Frankfort and the surrounding district, by the virtues and the charities of those who lived in it ; for there were to be seen at the early Mass in the chapel attached to its walls, not only those who dwelt within the mansion, but all those who sought for relief in food, in

clothing, and in money,—and none of whom were permitted to depart without receiving whatever aid they had come to seek.

So had the day been commenced upon that succeeding the events described in the preceding chapter. The Mass was over—the poor had been relieved, and now there were gathered in the great, dark, gloomy hall of the Frauenstein, the Countess Adela, her husband, one who wore the robes of a bishop, and a fourth, whose shoulders were covered with a thin crimson cloak, of the finest texture, and decorated at the four corners with star-like ornaments in rich gold embroidery—and beneath which, was to be seen dazzling polished armour which seemed to be composed of silver marine-shells, lapping closely over each other, but so minute as to allow of the freest motion to the body and limbs that they encased.

These two strangers were the Bishop of Halberstadt, and Otho, Duke of Bavaria,

and both apparently about fifty years of age, but with this difference, that the thin features, the grey hairs, the bloodless complexion, and the wasted form of the Prelate showed that his nights as well as his days had been devoted to long vigils, and severe studies ; whilst the fresh complexion, the jet black hair, the muscular form, and the erect figure of the Duke were proofs that much of his time had been passed in the open air, even though a few deep wrinkles on his brow, were there to show that his high rank had brought with it no small portion of solicitude.

All these now stood at a table, on which were placed thin cakes of white bread, milk, water, fruits, and wine. Their repast was not, evidently, that hearty meal which in England passes under the name of breakfast. It literally was a breaking-of-the-fast (*the fruhstucke*) by a small morsel of food, and served to stay the appetite until the hour of the substantial mid-day meal. The Duke alone tasted of wine

mixed with water, the Countess of a few fruits, and the Bishop dipped a particle of bread in water, and swallowed it. The Count Dedi, seeing that his guests had helped themselves, tasted nothing, but said—

“I do not like this long absence of Magnus. I fear they have removed the maiden from the palace, and that he is now in pursuit of her.”

“Fear naught,” said Otho; “my faithful squire, Bruin, is with him, and he has strict orders to return, the moment that any certain intelligence is to be communicated.”

“At what hour,” said the Bishop, “did your son set forth on the message of the Empress?”

“At three o’clock this morning,” replied Dedi. “Fortunately, a friend presided over the guard at one of the gates, and, by him, he was allowed to pass, unquestioned, beyond the mere assurance that the mes-

sage he bore was one of vital importance to the Empress and the Queen."

"Thank God for that!" answered the Bishop ; "for if your son use due diligence,—of which I doubt not—he can be with the Pope in four days. Ample time will thus be given to consider the whole of this important affair, and we may have the Pope's decision in sufficient time for the approaching synod, which a missive received by me from the Archbishop of Mayence, assures me will be held within three weeks of this time."

"The Archbishop of Mayence!" exclaimed the vehement Adela ; "is it possible that unfortunate old man can have sanctioned the iniquity of Henry—that he, for any advantage to himself, will consent to pronounce a sacrilegious divorce? Alas! if our Archbishops prove themselves to be the fosterers of sin, what is to become of the Church!"

"My dear child," mildly replied the

Bishop, “bear in mind that thou art a lay person, that thou art not one of the judges to determine upon the merits or the demerits of one holding so high an office in the Church as that of Archbishop of Mayence—that he who holds it has imposed upon himself awful responsibilities—and that these will be enforced by a tremendous and a just judge. Oh, beware, then, with all the fallibilities and weaknesses of a human being, that thou dost not pass a rash judgment upon thy bishop; for in his consecration, the Church tells us to bless those who bless him, and to curse those by whom he is cursed. Beware, then, lest in presuming upon thy own virtues, thou shouldst rashly judge him, and thus become the propagator of scandal.”

“I pray your pardon, right reverend father,” replied Adela; “but it is hard to see such scenes as we witness, and be silent.”

“It is harder still to be condemned un-

justly," observed the Bishop. "Let us follow the example of the good Empress Agnes, who is silent, but is still active, and who has, in this instance, taken care that if wrong be contemplated, the best exertions shall be used for preventing its being accomplished. But here comes Bruin, we are now sure to hear some intelligence on which we can rely.

The last words of the bishop were lost in the clatter made by the rapid movements of Bruin as he entered the room, and as he ran across the apartment in a haubergeon of thick armour, shaped in ponderous lozenges of steel, and that seemed to encumber him as little, as if each piece of metal was but a light feather. This man who was about six-and-thirty years of age, and whose red cheeks, fair complexion, and bright hair, gave him the appearance of being some ten or twelve years younger, wore a conical cap of steel, that fitted so tight to his bullet-shaped head, that once it had been fixed down upon him, seemed to be

an impossibility to have it ever again removed. His quick motions appeared only to be surpassed in rapidity by the flashing glances of his eye, and the wondrous glibness of his tongue ; for, before he had been a minute in the apartment, he had already traversed it from one end to the other-- dropped on his knee to the duke-- at a single bound stood erect and delivered these words :—

“ Two women, and a hundred horsemen, commanded by Count Diedrich, left the palace this morning at six o’clock, and have gone in the direction of Fulda. Duke Magnus is following them with five knights, and bid me say that he will send the earliest intelligence of what is their ultimate destination. On my return, as I passed the palace, I saw an escort of twenty horsemen with Egen and a monk coming in this direction.”

“ I thank you, Bruin, for your diligence and watchfulness,” observed Duke

Otho. “ The men of King Henry may be marching in this direction—but I know not wherefore we should suppose that they are coming here.”

“ I have little doubt, but that they are coming here,” said the Bishop, “ although I cannot surmise for what precise object they should visit the mansion of Count Dedi. I have told you both already, that it is my conviction the King is determined upon enslaving the whole of Saxony ; and the surest road for him to take, in obtaining success with such an object, is to involve either of you, or both, in some difficulty, which may prevent you from interfering with him.

The distant notes of a trumpet were heard, and scarcely had they ceased, when Bruin was seen again bounding into the room, and standing before his master, and then heard to speak forth a single sentence, that came upon the ear as quickly as if it were a one word—

“Egen seeks to summon *you* before the Emperor.”

“To summon *me*—the villain!” said Duke Otho. “Count Dedi, have I your permission to say he may be permitted to see me here—it is my present place of abode?”

“Certainly,” answered Dedi; “admit him.”

Again Bruin vanished and shortly afterwards the heavy feet of armed men were heard ascending the stone stairs.

The first that entered the hall was a monk with bare, shaven head, naked feet, and a coarse black habit, confined at the waist by a hempen rope, which served the purposes of a belt. The monk was followed by Egen, having in his right hand a spear, on his left a shield, and wearing a helmet, on his head; his legs, body, and arms defended by strong, steel-ringed mail armour. He was followed by four men all armed

like himself. The moment that Egen and his companions entered the apartment they ranged themselves in a single line, with their backs to the wall so as to face the Duke Otho and his friends. There they stood, until the monk had advanced towards the Bishop, knelt down, kissed the Bishop's ring, and then withdrew to the centre of the room.

“Wherefore come you hither as unbidden guests ?” said Count Dedi.

“ I come,” said the monk, “in obedience to the command that has been imposed upon me by the king, to be a mere witness and testify as to the facts that may occur in your mansion, should any dispute arise hereafter, respecting them. I come not here as your foe, nor as your friend, but as a witness—a witness to what, I have, like you, yet to learn.”

“ Then, Sir Egen, I must request of you to speak, since you seem to be the fitting commander of this doughty expedition,”

said to the veteran Dedi, whilst his lip curled with scorn for the man he felt compelled to address.

“ I am, Count Dedi, its leader,” answered Egen, “ for I am my own champion in my own cause : but first I desire to know am I allowed, by you, to regard on this occasion, this mansion as the mansion of Otho, Duke of Bavaria ?”

“ Yes !” answered Dedi, “ for whatever I possess, be it houses, or lands, armour or gold, I feel honoured whenever Duke Otho uses them, as if they were his own.”

“ It is well,” said Egen, “ and now, Dedi, Count of Saxony, and you right reverend father, Bishop of Halberstadt, and you holy brother, and you my valiant friends in arms, and you Sir Soldier, I call you all here now to witness, that I, Egen, a belted knight, do summon you Otho, Duke of Bavaria, to appear at the diet of the Empire, and in the presence of our Supreme

Sovereign the King, to answer the charge of high treason which I shall there prefer against you, namely, for having sought, on divers occasions, by great and rich promises to induce me to take advantage of the confidence reposed in me by my King, and feloniously to deprive him of life ; and for having, moreover, in order that I might execute so foul a deed, bestowed upon me the sword of Attila, now held in deposit by Count Rutger as a proof of the truth of my accusation. Of the crime of high treason I now accuse you, and to answer the charge of high treason I now in presence of these witnesses summon you, being ready, and willing at the proper time, and in the fitting place to prove my charge by oath, and, if necessary, by single combat. And, now, Duke of Otho, having in due and legal form summoned you, I bid you farewell. Fail not at your peril to attend to it.”

“ Shall I strike him and his fellows dead,

and toss the monk out of the window," said Bruin.

" For thy life touch not a single hair of their heads, Bruin," whispered Otho. " Good brother," said he, to the monk, " thou canst truly testify that thou didst hear me summoned by this man, and that the charge he preferred was for high treason, and that for words spoken by me to him ; whilst I, on the other hand, affirm that I never condescended to open my lips to him in my life—not, because he is my inferior in rank ; but because I have always heard him spoken of as a wretch, who degraded his parents and the station in life to which he was born, by the perpetration of the basest crimes. A noxious instrument in the hand of a bad man, I recognize in this charge not his own words, but I hear them as the echo of another voice ; the one is too mean for my anger, the other too high for my resentment. Say this for me to the King. Be thus far my witness

—and now direct that man and his fellows to quit this mansion in five minutes. If here beyond that time, I will not answer for their safety nor—for thine.”

The monk, the moment he heard these words spoken, rushed from the apartment, and was followed by Egen and his comrades, who in their retreat, however, observed the slow, grave, and decent composure of veteran soldiers.

“ It is as I surmised,” said the Bishop, as soon as the apartment was cleared of all but the Count, his wife, and Duke Otho. “ That, which I have long been apprehensive of, is now not merely fast approaching but has come upon us. In this assault upon the loyalty of the Duke of Bavaria, King Henry has made the first movement for carrying on war against the Saxons.”

“ Then why not take to the field, and at once defy him to battle?” asked Adela.

“ For many reasons, lady,” answered the Bishop. “ We are not justified in attacking another, who is our equal, because we suspect that he intends to do us evil—much less our sovereign to whom we are bound by oaths of fidelity. His crimes—proved crimes—can alone release us from our oaths.”

“ Next,” said Dedi, “ we must, my dear Adela, in a quarrel like this, be not only conscientiously convinced, that we are justified in drawing the sword against our Sovereign, but we must be able to prove to the world, that we are right. As yet, Henry has done nothing in Saxony, which he was not at liberty to do—he has erected fortresses, and he has garrisoned them at his own expense. We may surmise that he will not stop there; nay, we may be convinced, that he intends to go much farther; but our convictions would be no justification for our aggressions on him, in the exercise of his Sovereign rights. And even now—in this base accusation

against Duke Otho, although we feel assured that Egen is merely put forward by Henry, for a vile purpose, still as Henry shrinks from the responsibility of the falsehood, we cannot insist upon his assuming it."

" My friend," said Otho, " lose no more time in vain deliberations. Let each depart on the instant from Frankfort, so that at the approaching Diet, we may appear with as many retainers as possible. Let each of us, meanwhile, organise the population in his respective districts, so that when the first blow is struck by Henry, the people may be prepared to encounter him ; and, with God's help, to defeat that nefarious project which it is notorious Henry has long since entertained, of reducing all Saxony to a state of serfdom."

" Farewell, farewell," said the Bishop of Halberstadt, " and may God prosper each and all of us, as we mean to act alike, justly and honestly to the King and the nation !"

In less than an hour afterwards, the splendid retinue of the Duke, the warlike followers of Dedi, and the priestly attendants of the Prelate had passed out of the gates of Frankfort.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CAMP-FOLLOWER.

BEATRICE had been travelling for two days under the escort of the Count Diedrich, as she understood, for he had never once spoken to her ; but he had allowed her all the consolation, that under such circumstances it was in her power to possess, the undisturbed companionship of Gretchen. The latter joined Beatrice at the fortress-gate, as she was quitting Frankfort, and upon shewing to Diedrich an order from

the Empress, for her to accompany her charge as a female attendant, he made no objection to such an arrangement ; but merely said to her—

*“ Go—but don’t talk.”*

Gretchen assured her new mistress, that there was not a step of the road they were travelling that was not tracked by her friends —by Magnus, or some of his knights, or else by some of the adherents of the Empress. She even assured her that she had herself seen, if it were not fancy, a white and blue banner upon a distant hill ; but as Beatrice was not able to discern the same object at so great a distance, Gretchen admitted that she might be mistaken ; but still persisted in thinking that she was not.

It was the noon of the third day from the time they had left Frankfort, when Beatrice and Gretchen were thus conversing. Both sat in a green-swarded ravine, so narrow in breadth, that the deep foliage from the trees on both sides prevented the

sun's rays from reaching them, whilst high over their heads there toppled rocks upon rocks that rose up in one place as steep, and as precipitous as a wall, and beneath which lay a grassy, rounded mound of earth, covered here and there by bushes, the deep inclination of which terminated at the precise spot where Beatrice and Gretchen now sat.

In the mind of Beatrice there seemed at this time, to be but thoughts for three persons ; for her mother, for Magnus, and her father. It can therefore excite no surprise, that her conversation with Gretchen should be, not commenced, but in this manner, resumed :

“ And so, Gretchen, you think that the Empress will be so kind as to send intelligence to my poor mother, as to the sad fate that has befallen me, and of her Majesty watching over me—”

Gretchen did not answer this question. She looked, as Beatrice saw, *towards* her, and yet not *at* her, but at something be-

yond her ; and as she did so her eye dilated with terror, and her right hand slowly slid inside the folds of her garments, and remained firmly fixed there, as if she were clutching some weapon.

Beatrice turned her face in the direction in which she saw that Gretchen was gazing. At first nothing presented itself to the view calculated to excite alarm ; but at last she saw two large, dazzling, diamond-sparkling eyes fixed upon herself, and watching her so closely and fixedly, that the attitude of Gretchen had not been remarked :

“ Ah ! ” shrieked Beatrice, starting to her feet, “ there is a wolf concealed in the bushes ! ”

At the same instant a person, in the garb of a soldier, darted up from the earth, and was at the moment confronted by Gretchen, who now showed that her right hand grasped a long dagger. Another moment passed, and the stranger had wrested the dagger from the hand of

Gretchen, and then laughing deridingly at her, presented it back to her saying:

“No wolf, my pretty dame, but a woman like yourself. Here, girl, take back your dagger, learn to use it, before you present its point at an old soldier like me.”

In Heaven’s name! who or what are you?” asked Beatrice of the strange personage who stood before her—a woman, apparently about thirty years of age, on whose head was a soldier’s helmet, from which fell long, rough, curling black hair, that served to cover a neck, that was like the skin of her face, not merely brown, but almost blackened from constant exposure to the sun, whilst a thick, downy moustache of black hair on the upper lip, gave her the appearance of a man. And for such she might, by her brawny arms and large hands, be readily mistaken, if the ample folds of a woman’s short-dress did not show that she belonged to the female

sex. By this extraordinary personage Beatrice's question was thus answered :

“ I am, I have already told you, a woman. As to *what* I am, it may suffice to tell you, that I am the favorite camp-follower of Count Diedrich.”

“ Then why lie concealed there ?” asked Gretchen.

“ Another would tell you a lie. I will tell you the truth. I was lying there to listen to your conversation. I was doing duty as a spy. Diedrich reckons me one of the best spies in the king's army. Here, Gretchen, hand me that wine. Neither of you like wine. I do.”

So speaking, the sturdy camp-follower seized a large goblet filled with wine, and swallowed it off at a single draught.

“ But why become a spy upon us ?” enquired Gretchen.

“ Diedrich,” said the camp-follower, “ wished to know if you were contemplating any plan of escape from him. He

sent me to ascertain the fact. I have been listening to you at every place where you stopped for refreshment and repose ; and, excuse my bluntness, but I must report of you to Diedrich, that never in my life did I listen to long conversations so spiritless and stupid. It has all been about a fusty empress, a noodle queen, a nobody of a mother, and the truth is, you would both have set me to sleep over and over again, if it had not been for your allusions to a white and blue flag, and one Magnus. I want to find out who that fellow is. Let Diedrich get but within a league of him, and you shall see his white-blue flag turned into a red one, with the best blood that warms his heart. More wine, Gretchen, if you please—it is the pure old Rhine that Diedrich loves so much.”

Beatrice’s heart sickened, when she heard the probable murder of Magnus, so lightly and so unfeelingly referred to, by the terrible woman who stood before her.

“Here,” said she, “here, my good

woman, is a piece of gold for you. It is the only one I possess : take it, and do not mention the name of Magnus to Count Diedrich."

The camp-follower held out her brawny, broad, black hand for the piece of gold, and as Beatrice's hand touched hers, she clapped down her strong thumb upon it, so as to hold the hand of Beatrice attached to her own, and fixed as firmly to hers as if it were held within an iron clasp.

"Ho ! ho !" she exclaimed, with a laugh half expressive of derision, and half of wonder, as she gazed upon the snow-white, rosy-tipped, thin fingers and fairy-like hand of Beatrice, that seemed to be still smaller in contrast with the swarthy palm to which it was fastened. "Ho ! ho ! ho !" she continued, "so this is the sort of hand that King Henry admires—a little waxy thing, that is neither good for washing, scouring, nor fighting—why, I would make a hand like this any day, out of a little curdled milk, and a rose-leaf. Augh ! a child of

five years of age ought to be ashamed of it. Put your fingers in gloves, child, and when they are the size of a woman's, say you are a woman, but never until then. And now, as to the piece of gold you have given me. I am much obliged to you ; but I cannot earn it in the way you wish. I am a soldier, doing duty as a spy, and I must tell my commander that you gave me a piece of gold, not to mention to him the name of Magnus. Honour above all things, child ; and before all things : a soldier without honour is like a flask without wine -- worth nothing, and deserves only to be kicked out of every one's way."

"For mercy's sake!" said Beatrice, bursting into tears.

"Mercy! psha! who ever heard of mercy being shown to a spy?" observed the camp-follower. "Now, mark me, if that Magnus, of whom you are always speaking, intends to attack Diedrich as a soldier, well and good; he will be treated as a soldier, if he should be defeated and

taken prisoner. There will be the General's best wine for him at his meals, and his misfortunes will be respected ; but if, on the other hand, he be found lurking about our encampment as a spy, I know Diedrich well, the higher his rank, the greater his tortures—his will not be the death of a man, nor of a soldier ; but, out of Hell itself, there will be no tortures like to those that will be inflicted."

" Oh, my God ! why then mention his name to that frightful wretch, Diedrich ?" asked Beatrice, trembling with terror.

" Diedrich is no wretch, young pert miss ; but as brave a soldier as ever yet faced a foe-man," answered his favourite. " He cares little for his own life, and naught for the life of any one else. I tell you, I must mention to him that you had been speaking of a person called Magnus. That is all I have to say of him ; but cheer up, that means next to nothing, and perhaps Diedrich will give me a grim look for pestering him with such a trifle. But come now, deal candidly

with me, and I pledge you my honour as a soldier and a woman, that if I can help you I will. Only mind this—if you are aware that Magnus means to attack the force under Diedrich's command, say nothing to me ; for if you do, I must mention it. Anything short of that you may tell me, and I will not repeat it. Thus cautioning you, I ask you—wherefore is it that you suppose that Magnus is following the escort of Diedrich ?”

“ I am betrothed to Magnus—I have been torn away from him, and from my parents,” replied Beatrice ; “ and Magnus is now following the soldiers, for the purpose of ascertaining whither Diedrich is conducting us.”

The camp-follower clapped her hands with glee, when she heard this statement made in doleful accents by Beatrice.

“ What ! another love-story—a little fairy like you is run away with by my great giant of a Diedrich, and Magnus is a king's son, not hastening to fight with

him, but to find the road he is taking, and then, when he has discovered it, to go and sit down at the castle-gate, and blubber like a boy, because he cannot get in, and you cannot get out. Oh ! that is excellent. Why, what a pair of young fools you must both be ! But—no matter ! tiny doll, I remember I was a little girl myself once, and, therefore, I have pity on you. I can tell you—and I do tell you, because it is not secret : every groom in the camp is aware of it—the place where we are going to is the strongest fortress in Saxony—it is the fortress of Erzegebirge. If Magnus were here, I would tell it to him, this instant. It might save him from trouble, and you from care. In what direction do you fancy he may be discovered ? If it be no great distance, I will go and tell himself : I feel quite a curiosity to look at any one, in the shape of a man that can be in love with such a poor little thing as you are. On which side, think you, is Magnus lurking ?”

Beatrice hesitated to answer this question. She feared for Magnus ; and she did not know but that this strange and ferocious-looking woman might be seeking for his life.

“ Alas,” said she, “ if you should tell Diedrich where he is ?”

“ Me !” exclaimed the woman—half-drawing the short sword that hung by her side. “ Why, girl, you are the first that ever thought, for one moment, that Gertraud would act dishonorably to friend, or foe, man or woman, much less a child like you. In the field, I am a soldier—in the camp, I am a woman. I know what it is to shed human blood ; and when my rage is excited by the noise of battle, I have not spared the life of man ; but yet I never struck an unfair blow. Once the combatant is down, and helpless, I forget that I am a soldier, and I hope I act as a woman—and care for him. If I chose, I have but to give the signal, and I know I could have Diedrich, and a hundred stout

lances at my back ; and, think you, I would call them to help me to hunt out, and take the life of Magnus, as if he were a wolf—and that, too, at the moment that I was aware he was not following *us*, but *you* ? No—no—there are no such base suspicions as these in the camp. They can only find shelter in a heart, where true courage is not. But I forgive you—you have only the head and thoughts of a girl. If you choose, I will try and find out Magnus—I shall go to meet him alone. Do you think so poorly of him, as to suppose he can be afraid of me ? Besides, remember this—if I see him, he is safe—if any other person in the pay of Diedrich discover his lurking place, he is not merely sure to die ; but he will die the death of a spy. What say you now, maiden ?”

“ That I pray your pardon, Gertraud, since that is the name you bear,” answered Beatrice. “ I not only place confidence in you, but I ask of you to tell Magnus, from me, that it is my entreaty,

now knowing whither we are going, he will follow us no further—and that he will repair to my father's castle, and there state what has befallen me."

"Very well—and very sensible," said Gertraud. "And now in what direction may I seek him?"

"In that," said Gretchen, pointing back upon the road over which they had travelled. "I imagine he is about five miles distance."

"And what is his appearance?" said Gertraud.

"He is very tall, very fair, and very handsome," answered Beatrice.

"Phew! so are all men who are not very short, very dark, and very ugly," replied Gertraud. "The description is too general to be accurate; but never mind, it will do for one, who is used to the devices of war."

So saying, she bounded in amongst the bushes, and then darted behind a clump of trees, from whence she again appeared,

mounted on a strong-limbed black horse, that she rode as if she were a man.

“ And now,” said she, as she patted the neck of her steed, and looked proudly down upon the two young girls, “ I am sure to be back here again before the order is given for you to march ; for a dark deed is to be done in this very spot to-day, which I am better pleased not to witness. Did either of you ever see a human being slain ?”

“ Never—thank God ! never,” cried Beatrice and Gretchen, in the one voice.

“ It is a horrid sight !” observed Gertraud, “ unless it be in fair and open warfare ; for then it is life against life, and he who slays, only does so to save himself from being slain ; but a cold-blooded, contemplated murder, and that too the murder of a Bishop—”

“ Oh heavens ! what say you, Gertraud ?” cried Beatrice, terrified. “ Assuredly you speak in jest, and only make use of these words to terrify us.”

“ Girl,” said Gertraud, in a voice that became, from deep emotion, guttural in its tones. “ One like me, who have seen many men die in agony, cannot jest about murder—a horrid, base, cowardly, unmanly murder such as now is contemplated against a pious, and a holy Bishop. Poor Diedrich! he has promised to do it, and if hell lay between him, and the performance of his promise, he would yet jump into it, although every fiery flame of the bottomless pit, were a devil opposed to him. Jest, indeed! why have you been permitted to remain here for hours, and, it may be for days, yet. It is because Diedrich is lying in wait here for the Bishop of Osnabruck—for *here* he must pass with his small escort on his way to his diocese—and here, in obedience to King Henry’s command will he be slain by Diedrich. *Here*—I say—is the very spot on which the murder will be committed. As a priest, as a prelate, Diedrich cannot touch him with spear, sword, or dagger, but he will slay him notwithstanding ;

from that very precipice which now hangs over your head the Bishop will be thrown, and his body dashed from rock to rock, he never can reach the earth a living man. This is the place of his death which Diedrich has determined upon. He told me so himself. You will not be permitted, I imagine, to be witnesses to such a horrid death—that is, if Diedrich thinks of you, or of having you removed. Poor Diedrich ! he is so annoyed at the idea of having to murder the Bishop, that he has done nothing for the last two days but eat, drink, and sleep. The only words I have heard him utter for forty-eight hours are “more food—more wine !” Poor Diedrich ! if it were two men he alone had to encounter in combat, he would be as merry as a child ; but to waylay and murder a Bishop ! it is a horrid business, and I only wish it may happen whilst I am away. On my return, I hope to hear that the Bishop’s soul is in heaven, and his mangled body

in the grave. Poor Diedrich ! Oh ! what a precious villain that King Henry must be to make prelate-butchers of his best soldiers, and bravest generals. And now, fair lady, to meet with, if I can, that strange young man—*your* admirer !”

So saying, Gertraud shouted the word “ Away !” to her horse, and before either Beatrice or Gretchen could speak another word to her, she had vanished from their sight.

The horrible secret which had thus been disclosed to them, rendered both these poor young girls motionless for some minutes, and when they recovered in some degree from their terror, they cast their arms around each other, as if in thus clinging together they could mutually communicate a courage that neither possessed. They both at the same instant looked up to the high precipice, and regarded it with as much terror and horror, as if it had been already made the scene of that sacrilegious

murder, for which they had been just told, it was to be used.

The perfect stillness that prevailed on all sides around them, first brought consolation and hope to their hearts—consolation, that the crime had not yet been committed—hope, that the Bishop with his escort might not pass that way, and thus escape from the toils, that his enemies had set for him.

Both prayed that this might be the case ; but neither had strength nor courage to address her companion. They were two lone, helpless females, in the midst of a wilderness—the prisoners of a band of armed villains, who were watching to execute a murder—which, if it did happen, must occur in their sight, and that too, the murder of a bishop—one of those, who being elevated to a high position in the church, seemed to be for ever secured from the blood-stained hands of miscreants.

Speechless with horror—tearless from

terror, and with all their senses absorbed in that of hearing, two hours had passed away when the rapid movement of a horse behind them made them both shriek—it was a long shriek of anguish and dismay, and in their apprehensive fears, or in their excitement, or from the keenness to which the sense of hearing had been excited, both supposed that they heard that shriek echoed back to them from a distant part of the ravine. Both thought this ; but neither said so to her companion, for they were, at the same instant, addressed by Gertraud, who jumping from her steed said—

“ What cowards you are ! why your shrieks are worse to hear than the groans of a wounded horse, when dying in battle. Has anything occurred since I left you ?”

“ There has not been the slightest stir or movement any where,” said Gretchen. “ I would suppose that the soldiers have

left us to ourselves. I have not seen one of them, nor heard the voice of a sentinel."

"Oh! there are no men like to ours for an ambuscade," said Gertraud, proudly. "I defy an enemy to discover where they are until the sword of one of them is in his back. That is the way we act when we have recourse to ambuscades. You say you have not seen nor heard one of them for the two hours that are now passed away? Let me see if I cannot discover them."

Gertraud, as she spoke withdrew behind a tree—gave a gentle, low chirrup with her lips, as if it came from a bird—and it was replied to, from various points, by sounds similar to that which she had emitted.

"Ah!" said she, stepping again forward, and joining Beatrice and Gretchen, "if the poor Bishop of Osnabruck stood in the same spot that you now occupy, he

would have five arrows shot through him, before he would have time to bless himself."

"Oh, horrible! horrible!" ejaculated Beatrice. "But do you not think there is a chance of the Bishop escaping?"

"Escaping! and Diedrich lying in ambush for him—impossible unless he is a saint or a magician; unless he can fly up to Heaven, or change himself into a bird—but hist!" exclaimed Gertraud. "I told you so—*he has been discovered*. Our men are in the pursuit of his retinue. There is rich plunder for us. I must have my share. As to you—do what you can for him. Upon your knees, girls, and say—'May the Lord have mercy on his soul!'"

## CHAPTER III.

## THE SPY.

THE time fixed for holding the Diet of Frankfort, as well as the assembling of the German Bishops in Synod, was now fast approaching. By Henry it was wished for with a confidence that was darkened with but few apprehensions ; whilst by his hapless wife, Bertha, it was waited for with a fear, that was lighted up but with scanty and evanescent gleams of hope. Her only chance rested upon accidents—that Dedi

should safely reach the Court of the Pontiff; that the Pontiff would consider her case required his interference; and would it be prudent for one so weak in temporal power as the Pope, for the sake of a single, friendless woman to place himself in direct hostility to the most powerful, despotic, and unscrupulous monarch in Europe; and, supposing all these apprehended dangers were overcome, whether there was the possibility of the Pope's Legate obtaining admission into Frankfort, if he arrived in time to preside over the deliberations of the Synod—and, last of all, if she could hope, that by any lucky circumstance the Legate could be in Frankfort with the Papal decision at that precise moment, when his presence might save her from the shame and dishonour, with which her husband was anxious to overwhelm her.

Such were the thoughts that filled the spirit of Queen Bertha with anguish in her lonely chamber, and where there was not

one friend to bring consolation to her but the Empress Agnes, in the few moments that she spared from her daily devotions to perform this work of charity.

Far different were the feelings of Henry. He had already revelled in the thought, that but a few hours more could elapse until he saw himself relieved from that marriage bond with Bertha that had ever been hateful to him ; for his wife had in his eyes no personal charms, and her unaffected piety, and perfect purity of soul were felt as a reproach to his dissolute manners, and as a disparagement to his personal dignity. So hoping for the future, and so feeling for the present, he stood upon the battlements of his palace-fortress, with his favourites Werenher, Egen, and Lieman, looking down upon Frankfort and its environs, a few days before the time fixed upon for the assembling of the Diet.

The City of Frankfort-on-the-Maine was, even in the eleventh century, regarded as a place of great importance, as it had ever

been, from the reign of Charlemagne, one of intense interest; and—despite the mania of revolutions, which would dissociate it, from the recollections of the old German Empire—it still continues to be. At the period, however, of which we treat, it was a spot, in which the assembling of a Diet, brought in strong contrast with each other the various and discordant materials of which the Empire was composed; for here were to be seen the bold, freedom-loving, free-speaking Saxons, the haughty Franks, the fierce Swabians, the licentious citizens of Worms, Cologne, and Treves, with the moody Bavarians, the half-savage Bohemians, and the accomplished Lombardians, whilst the throng was increased by visitors from Scandinavia, and allies from Hungary. Each man of each nation came to the peaceful assembly, as if he were marching for the battle field; and he so came with his full number of followers accoutred for war—the princes with their nobles, the nobles with their knights, the

knights with their military retainers, and those retainers again having their special attendants. With these were to be seen the Bishops, and the great Abbots, having not only their priests to accompany them, but also their knights and armed vassals to wait upon them—and such was then the state of the times—to protect them from violence ; whilst pushing their way through armed men, through war-horses, and against stout shields were to be seen the King's farmers with carts and waggons guarded by soldiers, and bearing to the Palace, and the other appointed places in Frankfort, the provisions necessary for the King and his multitude of guests. Mixed up with these were to be seen the purveyors of various Princes and nobles who were bringing to the King's stores immense supplies of food and wine, so that whilst they thus tendered to him the homage that was due to their superior, they took care that he should have an abundant table for himself, and a hospitable

welcome for every stranger. With this crowd were also to be found those constant attendants on every crowd, the mimes, and mountebanks, and their companions that race of impostors, who suit their calling to the prejudices, the vices, and the follies of every nation—the magicians, that is, the fortune-tellers, and the poisoners of the eleventh century.

For such crowds as now came to the Diet, neither the walled town of Frankfort, nor its adjoining fortified hamlet of Saxonhausen could find sufficient space: and hence the plains around were covered with tents of many colours, and variegated shapes, and the fields, like the town, became a habitation for armed men. Among these, and holding positions distinct from each other, although separated but by a little rivulet, which a man could cross at a bound, were the encampments, or rather stations, chosen by themselves, for their followers, of Otho, Duke of

Bavaria, and Dedi, Count of Saxony. The banner of the former was followed by one hundred knights, and four hundred men on foot ; whilst Dedi had with him no more than twenty-five horsemen, and two hundred accomplished swordsmen—each man carrying, at least, two, and some four falchions of different shape and length. These held themselves aloof from the rest : determined not to be taken by surprise, and fully resolved, if an unprovoked attack were made upon them by King Henry or his friends, to punish the aggressors, and if they should fall, not to leave their deaths unavenged.

“ This is a gallant and a glorious sight for a king to see,” said Henry, to his followers, as his heart swelled with pride, in beholding the number of men that were clustering from all sides beneath him, and each of whom was regarded not so much as a subject, that he was bound to protect, as the ready tool of his absolute will.

“There is not a man there that I do not regard as a soldier for my war in Saxony.”

“All are so,” observed Egen, “except those few that you see yonder—that hold themselves closely by the banner of Otho, and of Dedi, and that keep aloof from the throng, as if they stood already condemned by the ban of the Empire.”

“They are few, indeed,” remarked Lieman; “but I have been close up to their lines, and I can assure you, that there is not one of them but has been in battle. It is a little army of veterans.”

“Do you account Dedi the younger as amongst the veterans?” asked Count Werenher.

“I do not,” answered Lieman; “nor did I allude to him as being amongst those veterans, and for a sufficient reason—he is not with that little band.”

“What say you, Lieman?” asked King Henry. “Are you sure that the younger Dedi is not at the head of his father’s soldiers in Frankfort?”

“ I am certain he is not,” answered Lie-man. “ No man is better known in Frankfort than Dedi the younger ; and I can assure you that he is neither in the city nor in the encampment.”

“ What means this ?” asked Henry, in an indignant tone. “ Am I to suppose it possible, that the son of Count Dedi will presume not to appear and tender me homage at my Court in Frankfort ? This looks as if a rebellion were contemplated.”

“ The time for requiring him to appear, or to receive a valid excuse for his absence is not yet come,” remarked Werenher ; “ but this I feel assured of, that nothing but a matter of vital importance to himself, or against your Majesty, could induce the younger Dedi to absent himself from such a military array, as we now look upon.”

“ Count Werenher,” said Henry, somewhat pettishly, “ I warned you, some time since, to surround the Dedis and Otho with spies, so that we might be informed betimes

of their entire proceedings. How ill you have performed your task we have now the proof ; for you knew not of the absence of the younger Dedi until Lieman told you of it ; and now, instead of facts, you can only supply me with your guesses, and your suspicions. How am I to know that the absence of Dedi may not be connected with some plot that affects my happiness, or even my life ?”

“ It is quite true,” answered Werenher, “ that your Majesty did so warn me ; but if you will be pleased to recollect, I also at the same time apprised you, that it was almost impossible to induce a Saxon to betray the secrets of the Dedis, or of Otho. I paid men as spies, and they have misled me. It is not an hour since I saw one of them, who assured me that young Dedi is in Frankfort. I gave him a piece of gold, and ordered him to be abundantly supplied with food and wine. Perchance, the villain is still in the palace, and acting as a spy upon us, even whilst partaking of

your Majesty's hospitality. Have I your Majesty's permission to seek for him?"

"Assuredly," said Henry, "if the villain has deceived you, I shall, with my own eyes see him seethed alive."

"Believe me," observed Egen, "that if the Saxon slave has resolved upon deceiving you, no threats, that you may use, will terrify, nor any tortures, however exquisite, extort from him the truth. These Saxons are a dogged, desperate, obstinate and malignant race of men."

"We shall see—we shall see," said Henry, chafing at the notion that any living man should dare openly to defy him. "But here he comes—a pretty fellow forsooth to set a king at defiance. Come hither, sirrah," he said to a man apparently about five and twenty years of age, with short, sandy hair, an enormous, bushy beard, a red face, and a strong, muscular body, although somewhat below the middle size of men of his race. "Come hither, sirrah! kneel down there before me."

The man knelt as he had been directed, and looked up at the king with a stupid, vacant stare, as if he did not well understand what was said to him, or that terror had deprived him of all his faculties.

“Now, slave,” said Henry, “know that you are permitted to kneel in presence of your king; that you are suspected of having deceived the sovereign through the misinformation you gave to his faithful friend, Count Werenher—a crime, for which, it is most probable, I shall content myself with simply having you hanged. Whether you shall be tortured to death or not depends upon the truth with which you answer me. Do you understand what I am now saying to you?”

A ray of intelligence shot forth from the eyes of the man. He gazed steadfastly at Henry, as if for the purpose of ascertaining whether he spoke in seriousness or was merely seeking to terrify him by a jesting threat; but the contracted frown of the king, the flush on the cheek, and the fire of

vengeance in the eye, showed to him that his death was determined upon. He next looked in the faces of the courtiers ; but there he saw imprinted upon every feature a passive, or utter indifference to him ; showing, that in none of them could he look for a pitying and merciful intercession on his behalf. He looked behind him, and saw the dark towers rising up to enclose him, whilst there stood as a guard between him and the ramparts, four men—the king and Werenher incensed against him ; Lieman and Egen ready, if directed, to slaughter him. A shudder passed through the strong man. He bent down to the earth, kissed it fervently, and said :

“ The will of God be done !”

He then looked up to the king and said :

“ What your Majesty has said to me, I understand perfectly.”

“ Very well,” said Henry, “ now observe : answer me candidly—if I find you falter in the slightest degree, I will have

every morsel of skin that covers your body torn away from you, an inch at the end of every hour!"

"Oh! mercy! mercy!" exclaimed the man, shuddering.

"Not a particle—if you tell me a falsehood. And now, fellow, what is your name?"

"Bruin," answered the man.

"Bruin—Bruin! I have heard that name before," remarked Lieman. "Of whom are you the serf?"

"I am no serf," replied Bruin, "I am a freeman and a soldier. I was born a serf; but the good Duke Otho made me free."

"Then you are a spy?" remarked the king.

"I am," answered Bruin.

"A spy upon me!" said the king.

"Yes," said Bruin.

"And for Duke Otho, or Count Dedi, I warrant," remarked Egen.

"No," was the answer of Bruin.

“ Then I am sure for Dedi the younger,” suggested Werenher.

“ For none of them,” said Bruin. “ I am a spy on my own account. I became so, without the knowledge of any one ; but with the determination, that if I discovered aught that might be useful for my master to know, he should be informed of it, and that too without telling him how the intelligence had been gained.”

“ Wretch and villain,” said Henry, “ for this, if I spare your life—and I do not think I shall, it can be only on condition of having your eyes and tongue torn out ; and your hair and beard shorn off.”

“ Mercy ! mercy !” cried Bruin.

“ None—oh ! none,” said Henry. “ And so —having determined to become a spy upon me—your king—remember that, traitor—you accepted the gold of Werenher, promising him, that you would act as a spy upon the Dedis for me.”

“ I did,” said Bruin.

“ And doing this, you intended to de-

ceive and mislead Werenher," observed Henry.

"I did," said Bruin.

"And you have deceived and misled him," said Henry, whose passion was becoming excited by the cool and resolute answers of Bruin.

"I have, most effectually," said Bruin.

"There is not a tooth in your head that I will not see drawn out," said Henry, now foaming with passion.

"Oh, mercy—mercy!" piteously exclaimed Bruin.

"Silence—slave!" exclaimed Henry; "then it is not the truth that Dedi is now in Frankfort?"

"It is the very opposite of the truth," answered Bruin, calmly.

"How long is he absent from Frankfort?" asked Henry.

"I will not tell," said Bruin.

"What! will not tell?" cried Henry, in amazement.

“No,” answered Bruin, “I will not tell, although I say to you, at the same time with perfect candour, that I do not know why he is absent. I only refuse to tell, because I believe it would be of advantage to his enemies to know the fact.”

“Then, where is he gone to?” asked Henry.

Bruin did not answer this question as readily as all the others that had preceded it. He appeared to reflect as to the reply he ought to give.

“Why do you hesitate?” continued Henry.

“I was thinking,” said Bruin, “what answer I ought to give you; and the only answer that I will give is—he *may have* gone to Cologne.”

“Remember I can have you tortured to death!” said Henry, clenching his hand in the face of the unhappy man.

“I do,” he replied, “and therefore, it is that I so answer you—he *may have* gone

to Cologne: I do not say that *he has*: search for him there—and, perchance, you may find him."

"I have done with you, wretch: and now know my sentence upon you. It is, that you be taken and put in a large cauldron—that cauldron then placed on a roaring fire—and that you be thus boiled to death. It is thus they punish great criminals in Flanders, and I mean to make the first experiment of such a death upon your worthless carcase. It will, I think, be a sufficient torture for all your crimes."

Bruin bent his head—kissed the earth—made the sign of the cross on his forehead—and then, without uttering a word, he shot up, as it seemed, with the same one bounding motion from the earth, striking his head full in the face of the king, and prostrating him with the shock, and at the same instant he was on the battlements, from whence he made a desperate spring—

ing plunge, that brought him clear beyond the trench outside the walls, from whence, he was observed running direct across the fields towards the encampment of Otho. He was safe from pursuit. Not even an arrow was discharged after him ; for the few soldiers that were on the ramparts had withdrawn from the place where the king and his friends had been conversing ; and the first intimation they had of any thing unusual having occurred, was seeing the king lying on his back, perfectly senseless and his face covered with blood. Those who saw a man running across the plain, never, for an instant, supposed that the circumstance could have any connexion with what had befallen their sovereign on the fortress wall.

As to Werenher, Egen, and Lieman, though eye-witnesses to the scene, they could scarcely believe their senses. They could not imagine how any man could venture to seek an escape, even from death.

by means, which seemed to present to him the chances of death in its most dire forms — the assault on the king—the height of the ramparts—the breadth of the trenches, and then the certainty, under ordinary circumstances, of being overtaken by the flight of a hundred arrows ! All these considerations made the escape of Bruin, appear to them, as being the work of some magician.

Meanwhile, their care, and that of a physician, was bestowed upon Henry, who did not recover his senses perfectly until a quarter of an hour had passed away from the moment that he had been first struck to the earth by Bruin.

Henry's first words were :—

“ Is the villain alive ?”

“ He is,” answered Werenher.

“ And unharmed ?” asked Henry.

“ Yes,” said Werenher.

“ Thank Heaven !” cried Henry. “ Now, Count, take especial care, that he be

strictly, cautiously, and even tenderly guarded."

"Guarded!" exclaimed Werenher, much embarrassed, "I am sorry to tell your Majesty that he has escaped."

"Escaped!" said Henry, who hitherto had been reclining on a seat, weak and exhausted by the loss of blood. "Escaped!" he repeated, as he started up, driven, by rage, almost to madness. "Escaped! How? where? when? In my own palace—on the ramparts—in the face of thousands of soldiers—in the presence of my subjects—within an arm's length of my friends—I—the king—the imperial ruler of Germany—am struck—struck even to the very earth by a serf's son—by a base, double-dealing spy, and yet, I am told, that he who did this has escaped! Escaped! then he must have vanished into air. I have been contending with a phantom, and not a man. Say so to me, and I can believe you; for that itself would

be more credible, than to assure me that the wretch who knelt there but a few minutes before, and who has dishonored me, can have escaped living from the swords of my friends, and the arrows of my soldiers. Oh ! but to have the villain living within my grasp. The weight of his head in gold for him, if living ; but not dead : no—no common death for him. A death—oh ! a clever, ingenious, cruel, awful death—a death, that a king must pity, for him who has shed the blood of a king. It must be this. Either such a death as that, or none at all. Attend to this, Werenher : I will not have him killed. I must have him an uninjured, living man to look upon. If he dies in any other way, then—he has done that which you say—*he has really escaped !*”

“ At present, my liege, he is not within the precincts of the palace,” said Egen. “ As soon as the bird that has flown from the cage has been coaxed or captured back

again into it, your Majesty shall be informed. We know where that which we seek is concealed. We have but to surround it with our toils, and it must eventually be taken. A mile or two for a wolf to prowl about in, is not an escape."

"Honest Egen, what you say is most just. How can a slave like that ever hope to escape, even though he may, for a few days, evade the pursuit and vengeance of his Sovereign ? I will," said Henry, "think no more of him, until I see him again before me, and then I shall propose a prize to the man who can devise the most shocking tortures for him. It adds to my desire of vengeance, against such a caitiff, that he should be able to occupy so much of my thoughts, when matters of higher importance, and of greater interest to myself should engage my attention. But this villain has assaulted me," continued Henry, in despite of himself, exhibiting

the impotency of his rage, in the harsh epithets he used ; “ this miscreant said that the younger Dedi may, at this moment, be in Cologne. What think you, Werenher ? ”

“ That because he said so, it is not the truth ? ” answered Werenher.

“ I know not that, ” said Lieman. “ He said many things that were true, also—as, for instance, that he had completely cajoled, and successfully deluded you, Count.”

“ Besides, ” added Henry, “ it is not at all improbable but that the younger Dedi may have gone to Cologne, for the purpose of escorting Archbishop Anno to the Diet. Now, it is of the utmost importance to me, in this affair of the divorce, that six or seven of the bishops should not be in attendance ; but the one, beyond all others, for whose absence I am the most anxious, is the Archbishop of Cologne. Lieman, you have often boasted that

you had many friends in Cologne. Think you, they could assist me in this affair?"

"I do, my liege," said Lieman; "allow me but to have with me an abundant supply of gold, and Your Majesty's warrant for whatever I may do, and I can answer for it that the next news you hear from Cologne is that the new Church has been pulled down over the ears of the Archbishop that built it."

"I care not what mischief you may do in Cologne," observed Henry, "if you prevent the greater mischief of the Archbishop being in Frankfort to oppose my divorce from Bertha."

"Then in that case," replied Lieman, "I had better hasten the preparations for my journey."

"Lose not a moment," said Henry. "I shall supply you well with gold."

An attendant of the King here presented himself, and said to Count Werenher:—

“The Prior of Aschaffenburg craves permission to speak to you, Count.”

“My cousin Croft!” said Werenher, joyfully. “Your Majesty spoke of giving gold to Lieman. Here is a man who is far too wise to come to Court without having his hands full of gold, or something better than gold. He is, at the same time, too honest a man to think of giving it away without getting something valuable in exchange. I have no doubt he has wealth to give, and a favour to ask from Your Majesty. He too, I think, is beyond all others the man best calculated to go with Your Majesty in any measures that may be needful, for silencing the opposition of the recalcitrant bishops. Shall I have the honour of presenting him to Your Majesty?”

“Nay,” said Henry, descending the steps that led from the ramparts to the palace; “so flattering is the description you give

me of the gifts of your pious cousin, that I am impatient to see him, and will therefore accompany you to your apartment."

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE PATERINI IN COLOGNE.

THAT which in former times was considered "wealth," was very like to, and yet very different from that which is deemed "wealth" in modern times, as affecting the great mass of the community. *Then* the *condition of mankind* was *the standard*, and *now* wealth is calculated by the *abundance of things*, without any regard to the manner in which they are appropriated, and without the smallest consideration as to how

they are distributed. A country now is said to be rich if it have large “imports,” and great “exports,” though those who produce its wealth, and even its food, may dwell in habitations unfit for dogs, or may be swept away by a periodical famine ; whilst formerly, no place was considered to be wealthy but that in which the labouring man had an abundance of the comforts of life—good clothes, good food, and good wine. “Wealth,” like the dews of Heaven, then fertilized all ; but “wealth” now is drained from the many, that it may be poured into the *tanks* of the few.

It was in the ancient, and not in the modern interpretation of the word, that Cologne was, in the middle of the eleventh century, to be regarded, and justly designated, “a prosperous and wealthy city”—a city so crowded with rich merchants, and well-paid artificers, that it is said by an ancient annalist, a contemporary of the events he describes, that “its broad streets could scarcely contain the swarm of men

that carried in their traffic on them." As to that abject want, that dire destitution, that helpless, and unpitied poverty which modern legislation, aided by the preaching of the politico- economical philosophers, and the practical example of unchristian rulers, have brought with them, such things were unknown in Cologne ; for Anno, the Archbishop, had, at his own expense, founded, or re-formed, and endowed with great wealth, several religious establishments, whose members were bound by their vows "to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to visit the sick, and to harbour the harbourless."

Upon the day then that Lieman visited Cologne for the purpose of carrying out the plan of King Henry, there was not to be found within the city, nor for miles around, a single human being, who had not had abundance of food, whilst within the walls of the town itself there was not a citizen who had not the means of indulging himself with the potation of as much wine

as he chose to drink. It was an indulgence but too freely made use of.

All the means that a wise and just ruler can employ for securing the personal comforts, and becoming enjoyments of those subjected to his rule, had been resorted to, and enforced by Anno. He had guarded them against want, he had protected them against oppression from without, and he had enabled them, by their own industry, daily to add to their comforts, and to increase, if they so chose, their riches at home.

If the Colognese had but been virtuous, they might have been as perfectly happy as it is possible for human beings to be in this world. They would not be so. The ease they enjoyed enervated them ; and the pestilent notions of the Paterini, which at that time began to spread like a pestilence from the north of Italy, infected them. The notions of those obscure fanatics mainly developed themselves in a stupid and malignant hatred against

persons wearing the Sacerdotal robe. Originating first in a dislike to bad priests —it then degenerated into a dislike to all priests, and at last might be looked upon as a heresy ; for its members regarded as friends those priests who contemned their superiors, and trampled upon the ordinances of their church ; whilst the priests, faithful to the duties of their calling and state of life, were, in the estimation of the Paterini, foes to whom no respect was to be exhibited, and to whom, when the opportunity for injuring them presented itself, no mercy was to be shown. Anno, conspicuous for his virtues, and his beneficence was an object of especial hatred to the Paterini in Germany ; and Lieman, a leader in the sect, felt an especial satisfaction in the commission that had been confided to him, of doing his utmost to injure the good Archbishop of Cologne. The task that had been entrusted to him, he lost not a moment in carrying into effect.

Lieman was well acquainted with the

manners and the habits of the Cognese. He not only was aware that their afternoons were devoted to the pleasures of the table, in the society of each other in the open air ; but that, when their brains became heated with wine, they were accustomed to boast, (as idle, wine-loving citizens who know nought of the horrors of war, are ever inclined to do) of their personal bravery ; whilst, at the same time, their pride was exalted, and their vanity excited by their own boastings, and vain flatteries of each other, because of their superior knowledge as artisans in their respective trades.

In this respect the handicraftsmen of Cologne were not an exception to their class. Humility may often be found an associate with a great and creative genius, in whatever art or science that genius may develope itself ; but it is rarely the companion of that which is merely skilled labour. The inventor—the architect, the

sculptor, the historical painter, may feel a distrust in their own merits, and their rightful claim to the praises bestowed upon them ; whilst he who *finishes*, or who *imitates* what they have begun, or who *fills up* what they have projected, seldom fears to claim for himself the highest praise that can be bestowed, for the successful accomplishment of that which he has undertaken to do. It is perchance from the certainty that the *workers* can have no future fame, that they are thus greedy of hearing their own praises, and are compensated by the admiration of the few that know them, for the obscurity that awaits them outside of their own little contracted circle of society. Another reason may be that they really are good judges of their own works, and that knowing—for instance the spear-maker that he has made a good spear, and the saddler a good saddle—they do but confirm, by their better knowledge, the just judgment of others, when their handiwork is approved of.

Hence the fondness of the operative classes for associating with each other, and of hearing themselves praised by their associates. The practice still continues ; and never was in greater vogue, than in the free city of Cologne in the middle of the eleventh century, as there were at that time to be found in it the best painters on glass, the finest bell-founders, the best workers in gold, in silver, and in brass, capital gem-cutters, sculptors, and polishers, famous makers of nails and wires, great men in fashioning saddles, folding-chairs, and footstools ; wondrous painters of the same articles ; with gold-leaf-beaters ; wall-painters ; window-solderers, and transparent-oil-limners.

Such were the persons that sat, upon the lovely evening of a summer's day, crowded bench behind bench and table behind table, drinking of Rhenish wine, and whilst they looked upon the ever-flowing waters of the glorious Rhine, thought of themselves as the greatest men upon this earth, and would have marvelled if they had been

told, that they were not at least collectively regarded as the ablest, the finest, the bravest, and the most gifted beings in existence !

Amongst those compotators there was one man conspicuous amid the rest, who from his years, and still more his apparent wealth, for he wore a massy chain of gold around his body to which was attached, by a short link, a dagger, with a sheath of gold richly sculptured, and a handle of sculptured ivory, in the head of which was a rich ruby surrounded with that transparent species of stone, that in the middle ages was called “the electrum.” Where many talked loudly, he talked the loudest of all : as many men, who have by their own energies and labours become very rich, are often found to talk. This man was named “Allman the gilder,” and it was supposed that the immense wealth he had so rapidly acquired was to be attributed to the fact, that he had obtained, independent of the other profits of his trade, far more

gold from the Archbishop than was absolutely necessary for the purposes to which it ought to be applied. This assertion might, however, have been but a scandalous invention of those who envied him on account of his suddenly acquired wealth.

Allman was now in that happy state, which is said to be “independent of the world”—he was very rich supposing he chose to work no more ; and as long as he did work, he had it in his power to give large wages to those whom he employed. It can be a matter of little surprise that such a man should be possessed of influence, or that upon a slight provocation his pride might be aroused, or his passionate temper provoked.

“I tell thee, neighbour,” said Allman, to a man whose goblet he filled to the brim from his own gigantic flask, “that the best gold which this earth produces is in that portion of the land of Havilath which is surrounded by the river Phison. As to

the Arabian gold, of which thou speakest, it is a very precious gold—very precious, and of a very beautiful red colour ; but it is one, with which many play roguish tricks, by mixing with it pale gold, and red copper—”

These words were spoken in so loud a tone of voice, that it might readily be perceived that “ Allman the gilder ” was anxious the entire company should be apprised of the extent of his learning. He was about continuing his conversation when a voice, as loud as his own, interrupted him, by saying :

“ Right—most wise Allman—and thou wouldest say, that the way to discover the cheat, is to place the gold in the fire, and if it be the pure metal it will not lose its brightness, whereas if it be mixed it will assume quite a changed colour—dull as lead, and dingy as copper.”

The person who spoke thus appeared to be a young man dressed in the garb of a simple artisan, but who wore attached

to his leatherne girdle a dagger with a hilt of gold, richly enamelled, thus demonstrating that the plainness of his attire did not arise from lack of means.

Allman the gilder was at first disposed to be indignant that any one in Cologne should have the presumption to interrupt him when talking upon that very subject of which he regarded himself as peculiarly the master ; a glance, however, at the richly handled dagger, and still more the scientific answer of the stranger, tended to repress the expression of his rage, though not to soothe his temper.

“ Well answered, young master,” he said, “ whoever thou art. I suppose thou knowest all the terms of our science, and can tell us what is signified by the basilisk, the red and green lion, and the yellow lion, and —

“ Aye,” interrupted the stranger, “ and the black eagle, and the salamander, and the milk of a black cow, and the egg, I

know them all, as well as thou dost, to deal with fire, gold, and cinnabar."

"Nay," said the impetuous Allman, "if such be the case I must embrace thee as a wonder for thy years. Perchance, thou canst also tell me how the Gentiles make basilisks—that is a rare secret. If thou canst tell me that, I shall love thee as a son."

"Then Allman the wise, I will try to win thy love. It is thus:—The Gentiles have underground a house walled with stones everywhere—above, as well as below—and this house has in it two small windows, so very small, and so very narrow, that scarcely any light can make its way in through them: and in this house they place two old cocks, from twelve to fifteen years of age each, and to these they give plenty of food—"

"Proceed—proceed, most erudite youth. I see thou hast got at the secret which I have been long endeavouring to discover.

Tell it—oh ! tell it to me, I shall make a fortune of that, which to others appears nought but gibberish. Why dost thou not proceed ? What has called away thy attention from this grand secret, to look at that stupid river ?”

“ Who owns that fine boat on which I see the banner of the Archbishop has now been placed, and from which I perceive the sailors and goods have been removed ?” asked the stranger.

“ That fine boat is mine—it is, the finest, and the most richly gilded, that sails on the Rhine,” said Allman, somewhat proudly. “ Ever since I heard that the Archbishop was going to the Diet, I have been expecting to hear of his claiming the use of it. All Cologne said he was sure to take it, and in that expectation I have (I tell it between ourselves) left few things to be removed ; only so much as will justify me in having a swinging sum

paid for being deprived of it, for a few days."

"Bah!" exclaimed the stranger. "This is the chattering of a chaffering slave; and not the bold-spoken language of a freeman, such as I thought I should alone have heard in Cologne. Thy boat!—sayest thou—it is not thy boat—it is the Archbishop's boat—every bit of it—from stem to stern—and see—his servants kick out thy wares upon the banks as if they were so much trumpery. Oh! if the boat were mine—no man—not even the King himself, as long as I was a living man, and free citizen, should dare to enter it, without first having obtained my permission."

"Hurrah! for the brave stranger!" shouted some of the half-drunk listeners, "Oh! if we had but ten such citizens in Cologne, we should no longer be treated as if we were so many slaves."

"Hearest thou that, Allman?" said a dark, brutal-looking maker of sword-blades.

“Thou lookest finely, and speakest grandly; but hast not the spirit of a mouse, or thou wouldst order those bishop’s serfs to be chucked into the Rhine. If thou art a man, say but the word, and I myself shall send three of them a swimming!”

“The learned youth is right,” exclaimed Allman, the gilder. “I will not be the slave I have been. Holloa! friends, neighbours, artisans of Cologne—hear me—help! I call on ye, one and all, to aid me, whilst I go and take back my boat—my own boat—paid for with my own money—my own money earned with my hard-labour! Come, I say, help me to get back what is my own—knock the archbishop’s servants on the head if they resist. Slay the Archbishop himself, if he attempts to rob us of our property—mind that, our own property. Come onward, fellow citizens—long live the free city of Cologne! Huzza!”

“ Hurrah, hurrah ! for Allman !” was now shouted forth by the voices of hundreds of infuriated artisans, as they rushed upon the Bishop’s servants, and stabbed some with their daggers, whilst others were cast into the Rhine, from which a few escaped by swimming, and hurried to the Archbishop with the intelligence of the disastrous riot that had so unexpectedly broken forth.

Lieman, who, disguised as the strange youth, had incited Allman and the citizens to this outrage, now urged upon the Paterini to bestir themselves. These secret emissaries were to be found in all parts of the city, calling upon the people to arm themselves, and for the future to provide for their own security and independence by expelling from Cologne, the Archbishop ; as the citizens of Worms had already driven out their Bishop by violence. Such advice as this was generally acceptable, and many hours were not permitted to pass away until it was acted upon. The rioters were

unchecked—wine was, at the cost of Lieman, abundantly supplied to all, and as midnight approached, the streets were filled with armed men maddened by intoxication. These, led on by Lieman, now wearing the helmet and the coat of mail of a warrior, and brandishing a flaming sword in his hand, marched first against the Arch-episcopal palace, and no sooner did his followers appear before it, than the doors were dashed in, and the mob were in an instant busily engaged in despoiling the splendid mansion of its treasures. In all places search was made for the Archbishop, from the topmost rooms to the lowest cellars, where the wine vats were smashed to pieces, and many suffocated in floods of wine. Even the chapel attaching to the palace was broken open, the altars despoiled, the vestments torn, and the sacred vessels contaminated by the polluted touch of sacrilegious robbers.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop had effected

his escape to the adjoining monastery of St. Peter's, a stout fortress-like monastery, which defied any sudden assault. But even here the Paterini of Cologne would not permit the Archbishop to be in safety. They collected torches, they gathered together enormous piles of wood, and they threatened, if the Archbishop were not delivered up to them, to burn the monastery and all the monks in it.

The generous Anno preferred the sacrifice of his own life to that of others—even the preservation of that monastery, on which he had expended so much care and wealth, was alone more precious in his eyes than the prolongation of the existence of an old man like himself. He was addressing the monks and urging upon them to consent to his surrender, when there appeared in the midst of them a man who was alike a stranger to the Archbishop and the monks. None had noticed this man's entrance into the refectory where they were consulting

together, until they saw him kneeling before the Archbishop, and exclaiming :

“ I pray your Grace’s pardon for having committed against you an unintentional sin, and the consequences of which I have now come at the hazard of my life to repair—if reparation be possible.

“ Thou hast my pardon—my forgiveness and my blessing,” replied the Archbishop ; “ but who art thou, and how hast thou come in safety here ; for already I understand that some of my friends have been murdered by those misguided men.”

“ For the present, it must,” said the man, “ suffice your Grace to know that my name is Bruin—that I am the squire of Duke Otho, and that my mentioning the name of Cologne, not with reference to your Grace, but to another person, has induced one of the emissaries of King Henry to come here to work this mischief. As to the manner in which I came here—it is one, by which you can

be conducted from this place in perfect safety. My lord, one of the Canons is my brother. He has a house which is built up against the walls of the city. It is some time, since you permitted him to have a small passage opened in the back of his house, and through the city wall. Once there, you are outside the walls of the city, and there I have now waiting four horses to carry you away in safety, from the vengeance of those villains. To gain access to my brother's house, all you have to do is to pass from the dormitory of this monastery, by a narrow door, into the sleeping-chamber of my brother. Come—come speedily. All the monks have to do is to conceal your departure as long as possible, and only, in the last extremity, to admit the rioters, and that upon condition they spare the place, in case they find that you have really fled."

The proposal of Bruin was joyfully acted upon. The Archbishop escaped; and it was well he did so, for there stood

outside the monastery gates two men who knew him well, and who had their pockets filled with gold by Lieman, on the promise that though the mob should be disposed to spare his life, *they* would not.

It was not until the repeated blows of the battering-ram began to shake the gates of the monastery, that the rioters were admitted ; and then, finding their search was vain, they resolved upon defending the city against the Archbishop and his adherents, and for this purpose appointed guards to watch the gates, and man the walls.

One man—a poor man who was discovered, when the riot rose to the worst fury, praying for the safety of the Archbishop—was hung, by the order of Allman, over the city portals ; and a poor woman was, upon a similar charge, flung from the city walls and killed on the spot. Such are ever the cruelties perpetrated by a mob, when it becomes invested with absolute power.

Allman and Lieman, with the Paterini, were urging upon the willing attention of a furious multitude, the propriety of attacking and murdering all the monks in the monastery of St. Pantaleon, because they were persons of austere virtues, and unlike to their predecessors that had been expelled by the Archbishop, for their irregularities. This scheme, however, was rendered abortive by the intelligence that reached them—namely, that the country people were indignant at the treatment of the Archbishop, and that they were in thousands marching with the Bishop's soldiers, for the purpose of burning Cologne to the ground, if full satisfaction were not afforded to Anno for the outrages that had been perpetrated.

No sooner did this intelligence reach the Cologne-men, and the crowds they saw gathering on all sides, as they looked from the city walls, confirmed it, than they, who had before been so ferocious, now trembled with fear, and in their agony they resolve-

upon sending a messenger to Henry, to beg he would take them and their city under his protection.

To Lieman the delivery of this message was confided, and he willingly undertook it.

Upon the fourth day from the time, he had been compelled to fly for his life, Archbishop Anno, followed by thousands of the poor agriculturists, and preceded by his knights and priests, was seen advancing towards the walls of the city.

Amongst those who witnessed that procession from the city walls, were Allman and Lieman.

“I had little thought,” said the latter, “that Anno was so popular.”

“Alack!” cried Allman, in a weeping, trembling tone, “I ought to have known it; for to the poor he was ever bountiful even to excess. He seemed to have no thought but that of comforting them, and of building monasteries for their benefit, and of decorating churches for their use.

Alack ! half the wealth I possess—more than half has been acquired by the orders for gilding he gave me.”

“ But then,” remarked Lieman, “ he has always been so proud and haughty. Look at the pomp of his train at this moment, the riches of his own vestments, the countless treasures in his episcopal ornaments.”

“ Yes,” replied Allman, “ but all these are intended for the honor and glory of the office he holds in the Church, and not for himself. See him, as I have seen him, when the mitre is put by, and the archiepiscopal robes laid aside. Then the only attendant upon him is a little boy—a clerk —then, he may be seen, as I have seen him, at night walking barefooted from church to church to say his prayers before different altars—and it is notorious that most of his days are spent in fasting, and many of his nights—whole nights in prayers. Pride ! —he has not a bit of it ; if he had, would it be a recreation to him to live as a monk —and, when in a monastery, to submit to

the obedience and discipline of a monk, laying the dishes for them, and performing other menial offices. Alack ! alack ! what a miserable man I am this day. Youth, thou wert my first tempter to do violence to this good man. God forgive thee !”

“Cheer up, honest Allman,” said Lieman. “ You and I are about to part—probably never to meet again—I say *never*, for I do not believe in another world ; but before I go, I wish to tell you, that I shall mention your name with all due honor to the king. It was his wish that, by some means or another, Anno should be prevented from visiting the diet at Frankfort. Now, I shall feel bound to tell the king, that you have given, by this riot and these murders, so much employment to Anno, that I doubt much if he ever again can pass an hour out of Cologne. Be assured, Henry will feel obliged to you —will laugh heartily at all this, as an excellent joke, even though you, his good friend in this matter, should be hanging on the highest tree to be found

in Cologne, with a dead dog appended to your heels."

Allman looked at the feet of the man who thus spoke to him, and bounding back in terror, and making the sign of the cross upon his forehead, said :

"Are you a devil—for I have heard that the devil was seen leading us on to the attack on the Archbishop's palace."

"No," replied Lieman, "I am but a man like yourself, and all I did was to waken up that demon avarice in your heart, when I spoke in the jargon of the Alchemists."

"But you spoke it—as none could speak it but those who have studied the science," observed Allman, the fear of death not being able to extinguish his old habit of thought.

"Then all I said to you I picked up from the manuscript of a monk, named Theophilus," replied Lieman, "and if you should not be hung, which I think you will, or blinded, which is less probable, I shall, as a proof of my gratitude, have a copy

made for you and sent to you. But it is a vain promise, and I recall it—you may make up your mind to be hung—farewell, Allman! farewell, fool ; farewell, dupe."

" Farewell, demon !" said Allman, " the curse of a dying man be your first salutation in that world which you say—is not."

## CHAPTER V.

## THE CONTEST FOR PRECEDENCY.

“ I have,” said the Prior Croft, upon being introduced to King Henry, “ a favour to demand of your Majesty ; it is that you will be pleased to accept from the most devoted and most loving of your subjects, this diamond cross.”

“ This!” exclaimed Henry, examining the gift with the eye not merely of a connoisseur, but of a consummate judge in such matters. “ Why this is the richest

present that ever yet was made to me. This is the true Byzantine workmanship—these are as pure diamonds as ever came from the East. What an enormous sum they must have cost you."

"They cost me no more than the bestowal of freedom upon a single serf; and the cross, as you see it, was for that purpose bestowed upon me, by the pilgrim who was wounded in Aschaffenburg, when resisting some of your soldiers in carrying off a maiden."

"Indeed!" said Henry, "and know you who this wealthy pilgrim may be?"

"No," replied the Prior, "he appeared to me to be a man whose mind had become crazed by being always fixed upon some one idea, whatever that might be. That he is not in full possession of his senses is proved by the enormous price he paid for a single slave."

"No pilgrim, but a man of noble rank and of great wealth, could be possessed of a treasure like this. I wish I may meet

with him. I should like to have the rifling of his scrip. But, good Prior Croft, tell me what I can do for you ? Do you wish for the vacant mitre of Abbot Meginherr ?" asked Henry.

" I do not," answered the Prior. " I have had the management of his wealth for many years ; and I have left the monastery so poor that it is now only fitted for the reception of some one, that your Majesty may desire to mortify by bestowing it upon him. I have thought of your Majesty, and how much more usefully its money could be dispensed by you, than if left to rust in the treasure-chamber of Aschaffenburg. I have, in addition to this cross, brought with me a large sum in coins of gold, and with these, some magnificently covered bibles, thick with gems, and every leaf of which is illuminated with paintings in the richest colours and letters of gold and silver."

" Oh ! most wise, prudent, and loyal Prior," cried Henry, whose eyes sparkled

with joy, when he heard of these rich gifts.  
“ What can I bestow upon you in exchange for them ?”

“ The bishopric of Hildesheim,” answered Croft.

“ The bishopric of Hildesheim ! would that I could confer it upon you,” said Henry, “ It is not yet vacant. The bishop is still living.”

“ The bishop was living two days ago,” observed Croft, “ but he has long been ailing—and I have had a sure friend in attendance upon him, from whom I heard last night that he had expired the day before. It is a rich diocese—it will enable me to save much more wealth for your Majesty than I possibly could do in the poor Abbacy of Aschaffenburg ; and that wealth, whatever it be, shall be all yours whenever an archiepiscopal mitre becomes vacant.”

“ Prior Croft, the moment that the crozier and ring of the dead bishop are placed in my hands, they shall be consigned to

your care," said Henry. " You are the man most suited to be a bishop of mine. It is a pleasure and a profit to me to promote men like you ; for there is no whining hypocrisy about you—no paltry squeamishness ; no pretence of doing that for piety's sake, which you really do for your own. Croft—*bishop* Croft, believe me, when I say that I love you, and henceforward shall regard you like your cousin Werener, as amongst my most trusty councillors."

" I thank your Majesty for your goodness," said Croft, " and, if the constant gifts of gold can be regarded as proofs of my affection, rest assured that the people of Hildesheim shall be made to feel, that I am a diligent worker in the service of my sovereign."

" Enough of professions, and even of thanks, cousin Croft," said Werener. " I have spoken much of your talents to his Majesty, and now, mayhap, you may give him a proof of them. It is a matter of the utmost importance, that as many of the

bishops and abbots as possible may be prevented from attending the approaching synod, or even taking part in the Diet. Can you devise the means for carrying into effect the wish of his Majesty? To prove to you its importance, it may suffice to say, that King Henry has despatched Lieman to Cologne for the sole purpose of creating such a disturbance there as will render it impossible for Anno to leave his diocese."

"Let me see—let me see," said Croft, walking up and down the room for two or three minutes, and seemingly buried in profound thought. As he walked, he threw out his arms wildly, as if seeking to grasp in the air, for something which he might cling to for support. Henry and Werenher ran to him, and catching hold of him, as he was about falling to the earth, they placed him upon a seat, and were shocked upon perceiving that his features were convulsed, that all

his face became of a purple hue, and that this colour suddenly disappeared, and was succeeded by the awful pallor of death. He gazed distractedly at both, and then, placing his hand before his eyes, he remained in that attitude for a minute ; and then, starting suddenly up, he walked about the apartment again as if nothing had occurred, and said in a cheerful tone of voice : “I pray your Majesty’s pardon. It is a slight illness, which sometimes affects me, when I give up my mind to the intense contemplation of any subject, in which I feel deeply and personally interested. Such has been now the case with me ; but it is an attack cheaply purchased, if it should serve to promote your Majesty’s wishes. I think I have devised a good scheme, if your Majesty can answer one question in the manner that I suppose you are enabled to do. How stands Widerad, the Abbot of Fulda affected to your Majesty ?”

“ As much opposed to me, as a subject

dare be to the King he dislikes," answered Henry.

"It is, as I supposed," replied Croft. "I know well many of his monks, and I am aware, through them, of the hatred entertained against him; for he is one of those fanatics who, under the pretence of reforming the Church abuses, is seeking to deprive the monks of their little indulgences, and compelling them to adhere to the hard, harsh rules of the ancient discipline. I think I shall find work for him to do in Fulda, as Lieman is to procure home-occupation for the rigid Anno. That will be the smallest benefit derived from my scheme. Your Majesty may remember that, when celebrating the festival of Christmas at Goslar, a dispute for precedence took place between Hecelon the late Bishop of Hildesheim, and Widerad, the Abbot of Fulda—namely, as to which of them had the right to have his seat placed next to that of the Archbishop of May-

ence. In that dispute a consideration for the antiquity of the Abbacy of Fulda, backed by the Abbot's knights, secured the victory to Widerad. Have it now publicly proclaimed that I am nominated the Bishop of Hildesheim: depend upon it, I shall revive that dispute in such a manner, that no bishop will venture to remain in Frankfort, but such as shall feel himself secure under the protection of your Majesty. For this purpose, however, Werenher and his soldiers must assist me."

"Excellent man! wise, and prudent counsellor! True and trusty Bishop of Hildesheim. All shall be done as you command," said Henry.

"And all shall succeed as your Majesty wishes," replied Croft. "The sun shall not set until my plan is carried into execution."

That same evening, numbers of the citizens of Frankfort were found gathered together in the great church of the city at the recital

of the collects or evening prayers. Some came with no other than devotional purposes, many in the expectation of seeing the King, the great lords, and the bishops and abbots from distant provinces, who always were found in attendance upon the Sovereign on such occasions. In all respects the aspect of the church was the same as on the preceding evenings ; but with this difference, that there were remarked, mingled with the congregation, many of the soldiers of Worms, who had already rendered themselves notorious in Frankfort by their impious language and their dissolute manners. Those, who felt surprised at their appearance, entertained not the slightest suspicion that they were present in pursuance of a deliberately concocted plan.

As the bells for the evening service sent forth their many-toned peals, Henry, accompanied by the Archbishop of Mayence, and followed by the great lords of his Court and the Prelates and Abbots, walked

up the aisle of the church, and passed within the railings of the choir. There Henry had no sooner taken his place in front of the temporary throne erected for his use, than the Archbishop of Mayence proceeded to his archiepiscopal throne on the opposite side of the altar. The moment that the Archbishop was seated, the chamberlain of the Abbot of Fulda appeared with a seat, and was about placing it next to the throne of the Archbishop, when he was grasped by the throat by Egen, who wore the dress of an Ecclesiastical Chamberlain, and said to him—

“ Villain, do you not know that the Bishop of Hildesheim is present?—how dare you, or your audacious master claim to sit here as the superior of my lord the Bishop?”

And as Egen spoke these words he dashed the trembling chamberlain to the earth, and spurning him with his foot sent him rolling down the steps on which both stood.

The Abbot Widerad of Fulda was a good man, but he was also well known as a man of violent temper, and he, now losing all command over himself, upon witnessing what he conceived was not merely an insult to himself but also an aggression upon the privileges of his office, as well as a sacrilegious assault, cried out—

“ Knights of Fulda come hither—seize upon this sacrilegious wretch—drag him away in order that he may be punished.”

A tumult instantly arose as several men endeavoured to push their way out of the dense crowd up through the choir, and to the steps of the altar.

Amid this confusion Croft, wearing the mitre of a bishop, was seen on the high altar, and from thence exclaiming—

“ The Abbot of Fulda calls on his knights to arrest my chamberlain who has discharged his duty in punishing the insolence of the Abbot. I now call on all my knights, and especially on the brave soldiers of Worms to come to my aid. Let

them cut down every man who ventures to oppose them."

At this moment, about ten of the knights of the Abbot of Fulda stood at the lowest steps of the altar, and were in the act of mounting to seize the Bishop of Hildesheim, when the new Prelate clapped his hands, and shouted—

*"Now to the rescue."*

The moment these words were uttered there burst forth from behind the high altar, where they had been concealed, fifty armed knights, fully equipped, with swords, and shields and daggers, and who, without a moment's pause, dashed down the altar steps. A clash—a yell—and then a loud shriek were heard—and the ten knights of Fulda that had a moment before stood so bravely together were seen lying covered with blood, and motionless on the marble pavement.

Groans, shouts, curses, now burst forth from all parts of the church, upon beholding this horrid spectacle, whilst at the same

time the Worms' soldiers drew their swords and hewed at all within their reach. Their blows were returned, and that with such courage and skill, that they were gradually driven up out of the church towards the altar. The Bishop of Hildesheim moved amid this tumult with all the steadiness of a veteran ; and King Henry looked with wonder on him as he saw how perfectly self-possessed he was, although soldiers were struck down by his side, and his vestments covered with blood. There was massacre going on all around, and yet the new Bishop cheered his supporters to the conflict, and, at last, gathering all his adherents in one body together, he and Werenher led on a desperate charge from the altar to the doors of the church, which forced their opponents completely outside its walls.

“ Here,” said the Bishop, when there was nought to be seen around him but the helpless bodies of the wounded, and the lifeless corpses of the dead, “ here is the cause of

all this mischief—here is the criminal Abbot of Fulda : here is the man who called upon his knights to arrest a Bishop, and that too in the presence of Your Majesty. I now deliver him up to Your Majesty—deal with him as you will.”

“I thank you, Bishop Croft,” said Henry, “for your zeal and piety. I thank you for offering to give up to me your prisoner, the caitiff Abbot of Fulda ; but I will have nought to do with him---he has caused the pollution of a Christian Church by the effusion of human blood. Let his ecclesiastical superiors deal with him as he deserves. Harkee, sirrah !” continued the King, addressing himself to the Abbot of Fulda, who stood trembling, though unfettered before him, and who, from horror at the awful scene of carnage he had witnessed, was unable to speak a word—“ repair, this moment, to the palace of the Archbishop of Mayence, and there give yourself up to him as a prisoner, until it is determined what fitting punishment can be inflicted

upon you. Go—I cannot endure to think of all the blood of my subjects you have caused to be lost. Go, murderer—sacrilegious and blasphemous homicide—go. Away with you!"

The Abbot of Fulda, without lifting his head to look either at the Bishop or the King, departed from the church, shuddering when he perceived there was scarcely a spot on which he could place his foot, that was not dabbled with human gore.

No sooner had he departed, than Egen, who had cast off his habiliments as chamberlain, appeared in his usual dress, and said in a joyous tone to Henry—

"I am happy to inform Your Majesty, that the Bishop of Halberstadt fled from the Church out of the town. I have been round to the palaces of the other Bishops, and all opposed to Your Majesty are making preparations for their departure. By this time to-morrow, you will not have a foe in Frankfort. As to the Abbots, they are less wise than I suppose them to be, if the fate

of the Abbot of Fulda does not terrify them. I suppose Your Majesty will have him publicly executed to-morrow ?”

“ Oh, no, Egen,” replied Henry, laughing ; “ it might cause me the loss of my crown to hang an Abbot merely because I wished him dead. Even my trusty friend the Bishop of Hildesheim would not approve of such short and bloody work with the priests.”

“ Indeed I would not,” said Croft. “ I would not hang a good hunting-dog, even though he barked at me. I would convert him to my own uses, especially when once he could bring me the game I most wished to have. Hang Widerad, and leave the monastery of Fulda as rich as it is : that would indeed be wickedness without profit ; and no man, not even a soldier should do wrong, when the act brings with it neither pleasure nor gain. No — no. There is a much better mode than that of dealing with Widerad, and it is one, that I contemplated, when I took care, that though all his men might be

slain, not a hair of his head should be injured. The entire fault of this transaction can be cast upon him, and we must take care that it is converted to the advantage of the sovereign. The monastery of Fulda is, at this moment, the richest in Germany. Founded by St. Boniface of England, it has, from his days to the present, been receiving rich donations of every description. In lands, in jewels, in books, in gold and silver ornaments - it is in itself a mine of priceless value, and before its Abbot is set free, we must exhaust it. The grand chalice and ciborium on its high altar alone would purchase a principality. We may have, in the king's coffers, these and all the rest, and that too for the sake of redeeming from bondage the person of a single individual. Why then hang an Abbot, when you may have almost his weight in diamonds? What says your Majesty to my proposition?"

"That I wonder at your wisdom, and

sagacity, whilst I approve of your suggestion," answered Henry. "I am cognizant of the enormous wealth that belongs to Fulda; I have often wished it was mine, although, until now, I could never discover an open path that led to it. You have pointed it out even at the very moment that you have removed from my road the impediments—the only impediments to that which I most wished to obtain. Ah! Bertha! Bertha! but a few days more, and the title of Queen shall be no longer thine. It shall be bestowed upon one whose beauty shall be the subject of wonder to all who look upon her—a theme for men to think upon when they would seek to raise their imagination to an idea of what may be the beauty of angels. Croft—I long for the moment, when I may see you consecrated as Bishop of Hildesheim, for though I have before now given away mitres for gold, I wish to give you yours for love—love for yourself, and gratitude

for the services you have rendered me. Keep with you the gold you have brought—I shall regard the spoliation of the monastery of Fulda, for which I am indebted to you, as the price you have paid me for Hildesheim."

"Your Majesty is very generous in permitting me to remain in possession of all the wealth I have brought with me," observed Croft. "I shall, I hope, not have to retain it long, as I mean again to place it, at your command, with whatever riches I may acquire in Hildesheim, whenever an Archbishopric may become vacant."

"I know that you will not prove neglectful of my interests, nor your own, good Croft," said Henry, smiling; and, as he smiled, he glanced around the church, and saw that in one place the seats had been overturned, and that in another, poor wounded wretches were dragging their maimed bodies along the pavement, and leaving a deep trace of blood behind them as they moved; whilst, in another spot,

were huddled together, the dead bodies of men, women, and even children, with those of a few soldiers ; and that even the bodies of the dead were stretched on the altar steps, lying as they fell at the moment that life had become extinct.

The smile of Henry passed away, as he contemplated this scene, and yet it never occurred to his mind, that any responsibility attached to him, as the original cause of all this massacre, in which men had done deeds that devils would not, of themselves, have had the power to perpetrate.

“ Werenher,” he said, “ let the wounded be removed, and cared for. As for the dead—let the bodies of all be buried in one common grave within the hour. The less the world knows of the number that have fallen in such a conflict as this the better.

“ Come, Croft,” Henry said, turning to his new friend. “ You shall be feasted nobly by your king to-night ; for you have this day conferred great benefits upon him.

And now—at last, I can feel secure as to the divorce. It is as certain as anything can be which is not yet accomplished. As sure as that, when to-morrow's sun rises, a new day shall have been begun."

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SKIRMISH.

THE shades of evening were falling fast upon the earth, and beneath the clumps of trees there was a darkness like to that of night, when two persons might be remarked upon the broad way leading to the town of Frankfort, and, though weary, proceeding at a more speedy pace than that of ordinary travellers.

“I greatly fear, Sir Pilgrim,” said one of them, wearing, with the ordinary garb

of a peasant, a short sword, and shield, as well as a bow and arrows, “ that the gates of Frankfort will be closed for the night, before we can reach them.”

“ I trust it may be otherwise, Bernhard,” replied the pilgrim, “ for this constant ringing of bells denotes some commotion in the city, of which I am anxious to ascertain the cause. I have so long been engaged in thoughts on one subject, that I fancy every other must be connected with it ; and until I am sure it is not so, I am urged on by an insatiable curiosity to trace out the meaning of each strange incident that presents itself. Once, I know, that it is unconnected with that for which I am seeking, I care as little about it, as for any matter that may have occurred prior to the general deluge.

“ And so it is with me,” said Bernhard, the forester, “ as regards the vow I have made. I am utterly regardless of all else but how I may best, most fully, and most certainly accomplish it.”

“ Our missions upon this earth, Bernhard,” remarked the pilgrim, “ are different, and yet they are somewhat similar: my task is greater than yours; for you have but to punish crime for its iniquity, whilst I have to rescue virtue from the fangs of vice, and may have, also, to chastise villainy. I do not desire to have the latter duty to perform; but, if it be necessary, I shall not shrink from it. The great object of my hope is that God may, in His wondrous mercy, allow me to be the protector of innocence—once on earth like to that of the angels themselves in heaven. But hark! did you not hear a sound in the air as if there were men engaged in battle?”

“ The sounds to me,” said Bernhard, “ are more like those of victory, of men who shout as they pursue a flying foe, of whom they have already made a carnage.”

“ You are right, Bernhard,” answered the Pilgrim, “ your ears are younger and more acute than mine. Still it seemed

to me, as if the conquered party were approaching this way : the groans become louder—and, ah me!—listen to that—there is the most horrifying sound that ever yet has been heard on the earth—the agonizing, despairing shrieks of women falling beneath the swords of an infuriated soldiery."

"Alas!" exclaimed Bernhard, "have we passed from a spectacle of horror in Aschaffenburg to behold as bad or worse in Frankfort? But listen, Sir Pilgrim, if my ears, that a forest life has made more sharp than those of other men, do not deceive me, there is, following the same route that we pursue, and on the road towards Frankfort, a body of horsemen, whose steeds march like those that had long been trained in the exercise of war?"

The pilgrim turned away his face which had, hitherto, been directed towards Frankfort: and listened attentively for the pur-

pose of ascertaining, whether or not, the supposition of Bernhard was correct. Both he and his companion were so anxiously and intently engaged in this, that neither of them heard, or perceived, riding at full speed towards them, a single horseman, who wore the under robes of an ecclesiastic, who was followed at some distance by two or three armed men ; and then again, considerably in the rear by the light-armed, quick-running, body-guard of the King —the men of Worms ; whilst those were followed by the heavy-armed Swabians.

The ecclesiastic who rode at such speed, and whose mind seemed to have been so pre-occupied by strong feeling, either of horror at what he had witnessed, or fear of personal injury, that he never observed that the road was blocked up by the two travellers, until he had reached within five yards of them. In the endeavour to prevent his steed from riding

over the pedestrians, he pulled up the horse with such violence that he brought it to the ground, and he himself came rolling over its neck, to the feet of the Pilgrim and Bernhard. Both were alike surprised and shocked, when they beheld lying, stunned and motionless, before them, one who was not merely a priest ; but, from the gold cross on his breast, and the massive episcopal ring on his right hand was obviously a bishop. The first, as it was the natural, impulse of both was to stoop down to lift the fallen prelate, when the pilgrim exclaimed—

“Oh, Heavens ! it is Bucco, Bishop of Halberstadt, the brother of Anno, of Cologne. His flight from Frankfort shews that the wicked there have had another triumph over the good. How long, oh, Lord ! how long shall these sinners remain unvisited by Thy vengeance ?”

“See—Sir Pilgrim—the Bishop is recovering his senses. He has been stunned

but not injured by the fall from his horse," said Bernhard, with great joy.

"Where am I?" asked the Bishop, "not remembering for the instant, the events that had so recently occurred.

"From this moment, my Lord Bishop," answered the Pilgrim, "amongst friends; even though they be no more than two helpless strangers. But who are these men that ride so quickly after you, and that seem to be so hotly pursued by others?"

"These," said the Bishop, "are my servants and friends, and those that pursue them are my enemies. I have fled from Frankfort because of the murders that were there so sacrilegiously committed in my presence—unchecked, and unreproved by the King—which provesto me that he, at least, if he does not order such deeds to be done, will visit with no severe punishment those who may slay me and other ecclesiastics. I have fled to save my life—those who follow desire, if not to kill me, (and such I

hink is their intention) at least, to rob me and my suite of whatever articles of value we may have brought with us."

"Are any of your Lordship's followers practised in warfare," enquired the Pilgrim.

"No," answered the Bishop, "but all are brave and ready to die in the discharge of their duty."

"I presume to ask the question, my Lord," said the Pilgrim, "because I have commanded soldiers in many a well-fought field, and am now willing, if you will permit me for the moment to command your friends, to expose my life for the purpose of saving yours and theirs, if either should, without provocation, be attacked."

"I accept your offer, and thank you for making it," said the Bishop. "Here, my friends," he said to his attendants, as they came panting up to him, and their horses completely breathless; "regard this pilgrim as your commander. Obey his

directions as if they were given by myself, and you will find, that I shall give you the first example of obedience."

Amongst the men who were clustered around the Bishop, the Pilgrim and Bernhard, were a few ecclesiastics, two in priest's orders, and three in minor, twelve horsemen having spears, shields and swords, and six men who had with their swords and shields, long bows and arrows.

"My friends," said the Pilgrim, "the commands, which I have to give you on the part of the Bishop of Halberstadt to defend him and yourselves against those who are seeking your lives, are few and brief. First, let all the ecclesiastics withdraw themselves into the wood which skirts the road; place themselves out of the reach of weapons on both sides, and give to us, whilst the battle lasts, (if there is to be a battle,) all the benefit of their prayers. I have little doubt that such will aid us more than sword or spear in gaining

the victory. As to you knights with spears and shields, place yourselves on the outskirts, so as, to conceal yourselves from view, and be ready to rush upon the enemy if they attempt to enter the wood, whilst those who have bows and arrows let them each conceal himself behind a tree, select a man for himself amongst the pursuers ; take aim deliberately at him and when directed, discharge their weapons at once, and so keep on shooting, until directed by me to stop. This man Bernhard, beside me, will attack whomsoever may be the leader of the enemy ; let no man else discharge a weapon against him. As to the Bishop, he will remain by my side in the road—let one of you lend him a shield to protect him from any sudden or treacherous attack, and another bestow on me a sword, in order that I may, if necessary, protect my life. And now, knights and archers, I have but one direction more to give you. It is this : If you

and your Bishop, in endeavouring to preserve your lives, are attacked by those to whom you have done no wrong, remember that you owe it to God, to his church, and to your consecrated lord, the Bishop, to rid the earth of the villains who are assailing its ministers, and robbing the almoners of the poor. Treat them then, as you would a pack of wolves who had pursued you, for the purpose of devouring you. Slay as many of them as you can—exterminate every one of them from the face of this earth, and as they have no pity on you, and no respect for God, show them likewise no mercy. Heaven grant ! we may be permitted to lessen the number of miscreants that to-morrow's sun might see living, and corrupting the pure air by their poisonous existence. Slaughter them one and all, if you can. And now men, to shelter ; remember, every blow you strike, and every life you take is in your own defence, and that of the Bishop whose bread you have eaten."

As the men withdrew, the Pilgrim turned to Bernhard, and whispered—

“I fear one of the Bishop’s men has fled away from fear ; it seemed to me that there was the sound of horses’ feet running in that direction.”

As the Pilgrim spoke, he pointed to the side from which both, a few moments before, had fancied they heard the noise made by a body of horsemen in full march.

“No,” answered Bernhard, “all the men of the Bishop have obeyed your commands with the readiness, steadiness, and hearty good will of old soldiers “But this I am sure of, that all you said has been heard by a listener from the body of horse that are marching towards Frankfort, and that he has ridden back in full speed to report your speech to his commander. It was the noise made by that man’s retreat you heard, not any caused by the desertion of a single soldier.

“What you say to me, induces me to change my original plan,” replied the Pilgrim. “Here, my lord,” he said to the Bishop, “instead of remaining in the centre of the road, we must leave it as clear as possible. Stand here, my lord, in front of this tree, and the first hostile movement made against, or at you, retire behind it. Bernhard on one side, and I on the other, will protect you, as long as life remains to both. Now,” he whispered to Bernhard, “if what I said were heard by a friendly spy, and reported to a friendly commander—these horsemen will give us an instantaneous victory. If, on the contrary, it was heard by an enemy, say a short prayer, Bernhard, for, in five minutes more, you and I, and all here, may be counted amongst the dead. The will of God be done !”

“Amen !” said Bernhard, as he bent his bow, and drew forth an arrow.

As these words were spoken, the light-armed horsemen of Worms came dashing

at a quick pace up the highway. They were about fifty in number, and the moment that a turning of the road brought them within view of the white vestments of the Bishop, a shout of joy was raised, and about twenty dashed out of the ranks for the purpose of seizing the bishop.

“Hold! back for your lives!” rang in their ears in those appalling tones of voice which had before now excited terror in many a field of battle.

“Who bids us back,” said a young man, with a silver-lacquered helmet, and a cuirass that glittered as if every scale were composed of polished silver.

“I,” answered the Pilgrim, “the commander of the forces for the protection of the Bishop of Halberstadt, bid you back, until I know why and wherefore you come in pursuit of the Prelate, William of Worms,” continued the Pilgrim, addressing himself to the young man in the silver-armour. “I ask the question of thee — the

leader of this troop—I ask why thou, who hast already rendered thyself notorious by thy persecution of the Bishop, who presided over the diocese of Worms—I ask, why thou art now in pursuit of Bucco of Halberstadt, a bishop, who has nought to do with thee?"

"I follow him as my foe," answered William, "because he is a bishop—I pursue him, for his wealth. I wish to rid the earth of all proud prelates, and I long to see the riches that they so selfishly store up in their coffers distributed amongst such brave fellows, as the armed citizens of Worms. But enough of words—give up the bishop to us, and with him all his wealth, and, perchance, we may spare your life, and that of your soldiers; but, attempt to draw a sword, or discharge an arrow against us, and we shall hang up, on those trees beneath which you now stand, him, and you, and every man amongst you. Come, men, onward."

“Draw your arrows to the head,” exclaimed the Pilgrim, as he saw William advancing. “Now—discharge them.”

As these words were uttered, a whizzing sound was heard, followed by shrieks of agony, and William of Worms, shot through the brain with an arrow, lay instantly dead upon the field, whilst six others of his men were unhorsed, and writhing in agony on the earth.

This unexpected and fatal discharge threw confusion into the ranks of the assailants. It checked their career, and they wheeled round into the centre of the road, and as they did so, there came another, and a fearful discharge from the forest, which had the effect of vacating many more of the saddles. They stood for an instant hesitating and doubtful as to whether they would retreat or advance, when the sound reached their ears of a heavy body of horsemen advancing at full charge. They expecting the Swabians, who

had followed them from Frankfort, raised a loud cheer; but as they did so, there burst down upon them a compact body of men, with their lances tilting at their hearts, and in one moment their men and steeds were transpierced with wounds, or overturned as they stood, whilst the air rang with the shout :

“ For God and the bishop, and the old Saxon land for ever.”

A yell of despair was uttered by the wounded and the fugitive men of Worms, and that yell found a terrible response in the voice of the Pilgrim, as he called out from the forest depth :

“ Now, men of Halberstadt—no more spears nor arrows—to your swords—slaughter every wretch of Worms that you see maimed. The wounded soldier is entitled to mercy—but show none to those who avow themselves to be robbers, murderers, and persecutors of priests.”

How rigidly these orders were obeyed, was soon perceived in the deadly thrusts

that were given, and in the short, agonizing groans of death that followed, and in three minutes there lay in front of that tree behind which the bishop had concealed himself, not less than five and thirty lifeless bodies of the Worms' soldiers.

Meanwhile the bands of horsemen, who had come so unexpectedly to the rescue of the little force under the command of the Pilgrim, passed onward in pursuit of the few retreating soldiers who had escaped the shock of the first charge, striking them down one by one as they overtook them. The last of them had been reached, and the battle-axe borne by the commander of the Saxon horsemen had fallen upon his helmet, and sent him to the earth with his skull crushed ; when the whole landscape which for some time had been buried in gloomy darkness, became suddenly illuminated by the rays of the moon, and showed that there was advancing on the side from Frankfort, a body of the Swabians about sixty in number ; whilst those

who were now victorious could count somewhat more than a hundred spears ; and behind them were to be seen stretched the bodies they had slain in the pursuit, lying here and there along the highway, whilst far behind the soil seemed to be strewed thickly with the bodies of the soldiers of Worms.

Count Werenher, the commander of the Swabian horsemen on this occasion, could perceive all these things plainly, The bright gleam of the moonlight brought out the prominent points as distinctly as if the sun's rays shone on them, even though all, so seen, and encased as it were in a silver light, was but rendered the more conspicuous by the contrasting dark shade that fell upon and obscured every place that the rays of the moon could not penetrate. Thus, immediately in his front was a body of horsemen stronger than his own ; around and behind them the corpses of the dead, and most of these lying in front of another

armed body of men—how few or how many, the dark, thick trees of the forest prevented him from ascertaining, whilst at a considerable distance behind them was a numerous body of foot soldiers, in the midst of which, as if it were a standard, there arose a large cross, apparently of polished gold or silver, or steel, for it glittered, even though so far removed from him, as if the light loved to play about, and to shoot forth sparkles from its glittering surface.

Werenher was naturally not a brave man—that is he had not as much of courage as in most cases characterises all animals of the male sex ; and he was not as ready as most men of his age, who placed on his head a helmet, and in his hand a sword to go to battle, and to take the life of another, even though in so doing he exposed himself to wounds and death. The scene that now presented itself shook his heart with fear : for it came upon him by surprise, and was the very opposite of

that which he had supposed he should have had to encounter ; for having heard that the Worms' men had set out in pursuit of the Bishop of Halberstadt, he had joined the Swabian horse, and taken command of them, with the intention if any rich spoil had been found on the prelate to have claimed a portion of it for the King. Now, however, he perceived that of the fifty men that had gone in pursuit of the Bishop not one had been left alive, and that he and his soldiers were opposed to a superior force, and that force was sustained by others, the numbers or the strength of which he could not calculate. He saw that if he were to attack the men in his front, it was, almost a matter of certainty, that he and the Swabians would be routed, and yet he was ashamed to run away without venturing to ascertain who the persons were that had slain the brave soldiers of Worms. He therefore ordered his men to halt whilst he advanced alone towards the strangers' ranks.

On the other side, the victorious body of horsemen halted on perceiving the Swabians — and closing up their ranks, and allowing their horses time to breathe, seemed to wait for the moment, when they should be ordered to charge down in a body upon them. Their commander, who seemed to watch with some curiosity the manœuvres of the Swabians, and to look out anxiously towards Frankfort to see if any new force were coming to their aid, perceiving Count Werenher advanced, and rode slowly towards the Count.

“Who and what are you?” exclaimed Werenher.

“We are friends, if you come in peace,” replied the commander of the horsemen, “foes if you come in pursuit of the Bishop of Halberstadt.”

“Where are the men of Worms?” asked Werenher.

“It is my firm belief,” replied the Commander, “that they are by this time all in

hell. At least I have done all that lay in my power to send them there, by ridding the world of such villains."

"And who then are you that have thus slain the trusty soldiers of the King? By what name are you called?" again asked Werenher.

"My name is written on my sword blade. If thou wilt but come near enough, thou shalt read it," answered the brave Commander of the horsemen.

"This then," said Werenher, "is the only answer that I am to bear to the King, from the murderer of his soldiers."

"It is, if the King sent those soldiers to rob and murder the Bishop of Halberstadt. If the King gave them no such commission, then you should know that as a knight I have but discharged my duty, that I would be unworthy of my rank if it had been said of me in Swabia 'I injured a woman, or a maiden;' in the Palatine, 'if I had injured the holy Roman Empire;' in Bavaria 'if I had deceived another, or

broken my word ;' or if, according to the *dicta* of the good Henry, ' I had, by word or deed, injured the holy church ;' and now I say to thee, if thou be a knight, or dost aspire to be a knight, thou dost dishonour to thyself, and art unworthy now, and ever more, to grasp lance, sword, or shield, if thou dost forget the rule of Conrad of Franconia, ' that no man is or can be a knight, who has ever run away from the field of battle.'

" I am the servant of King Henry, and I fight when he commands. I am not to be taunted into an unequal fight by the boastings of a braggart. Farewell, sir stranger. Thou shalt yet dearly rue the bloody deeds of this evening."

" Farewell, Count Werenher," replied the strange commander, " thou art a craven—remember thou, a Franconian, now fliest from the combat though provoked to it. Away, coward ! it is not the first time the epithet has been bestowed upon thee—

farewell, woman-hunter, man-fearer—accursed of God."

The face of Count Werenher, as he rode back to his soldiers was more pale, more ghastly, more terrific than that of any one of the lifeless and mangled corpses that lay stretched at his feet.

"Back men," he said, "in speed to Frankfort. We cannot cope with such a superior force. To do so would be to expose ourselves to the fate of the soldiers of Worms, of whom, not a man has been left alive. Back then to Frankfort with such speed as you may. It is *he*," muttered Count Werenher, to himself; "his words disclosed that which the frontlet of his helmet had, until that moment, concealed from me. It is *he*! it is *he*—whose expressions of scorn for me are drops of liquid fire in my brain. It is *he*—my mortal, unrelenting foe—Dedi the younger! Why do I live? Of what value to me is life, if I cannot have him slain. He is the mur-

derer of the men of Worms. That is my intelligence for Henry I much mistake if he will not sigh for vengeance as ardently as I do—but I must slay him myself. Yes—yes, his blood, fresh and warm, on my hands can alone cool that hell-fire with which his scornful words have filled me. Dedi th younger—woe! ten thousand woes to thee!"

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE PARLIAMENT IN FRANKFORT.

THE Diet or Parliament that had been convoked by Henry at Frankfort for the especial, although unavowed, purpose of destroying Otho, Duke of Bavaria, was one remarkable for its magnificence. There Henry was to be seen, high-throned above all others, wearing, as if it were the day of his coronation as Emperor, the imperial robes, beneath which, was his military tunic of linen, made tight to the waist with

a belt of pure gold ; and to that belt was attached a sword in a sheath of burnished gold, and having a hilt that was resplendent with sparkling jewels. He wore on his head a king's crown, and not the massive, imperial crown of Charlemagne, set with rough diamonds ; and about him were the grand officers of the Empire, by virtue of their rank, as well as their office having on their heads dazzling coronets, and robes that were stiff with gold. These were the mareschal or groom, the Truchsess or carver—the Mundschenk or cup-bearer—the Kammerer or chamberlain—the Kuchenmeister or master of the kitchen—the Hausmeier or master of the household—and with these, were to be seen, but all in gorgeous armour, the great crown vassals or counts, with the Dukes of various principalities ; and arranged close to the King, the Archbishop of Mayence, the Bishops, and high Abbots of the Empire, and all with mitres, crosiers, in their richest vestments of state, whilst

around the church in which the assembly was held, and outside the walls, and guarding every avenue, were the red-clothed, strongly-armed *schaaren*, or mercenary troops, in the especial pay of the sovereign.

Such a spectacle was one in which Henry took especial delight ; for he not merely desired to have power, but he wished the world to be convinced, by such an exhibition as this, that he could exercise it. On the present occasion he believed there were none present but those who were his steadfast friends, for as he had taken care to terrify, by a deed of blood, the bishops hostile to him, from being in attendance, so had he also taken care that few Briefs should be addressed to any but his adherents of the Dukes or Counts of the Empire, inviting them to this assembly, to afford to him their “advice and assistance.” He had, to use a modern phrase, that the malignity and perversity of men have rendered but too fami-

liar, “*packed*” his Parliament or Diet, as he had “*packed*” the Synod of the bishops ; and he calculated upon obtaining from both “*a verdict contrary to the evidence.*”

The proceedings, on this occasion, were commenced by Henry, who thus addressed his hearers :

“ Princes, dukes, archbishops, bishops, abbots, counts of the Empire, we have unwillingly, but yet, perforce, felt ourselves compelled to summon you to a colloquy with us this day. We have done so unwillingly ; for we well know that it is a grievous burden upon most of you to have to travel such a distance upon affairs which can but remotely, as individuals, concern you ; and yet we have done so, because, as members of the German Empire, it is of vital consequence to you, that no treason of any one individual should tend to diminish, and, mayhap, destroy that Empire, which we, when taking the

oath of Emperor, are bound to swear that we shall augment.

“ We have done so, perforce, because the occasion has arisen, when we felt ourselves compelled to call our Princes together, in order that we might have, as it is our right to have, their advice, and, if need be, their assistance and support. We wish, in your presence, to be consoled by the proof of your loyalty ; and we desire, by your wise counsels, to be directed how we may act with prudence and with justice.

“ Hence it is, dearest friends, and loving subjects, that we have summoned you to attend us here this day, so that we may with you consult how we may best provide for the peace of the land, the honor of the church, the due respect to be paid to princes, and the fitting happiness of the people.

“ None of these things are attainable, if treason remain unpunished, or perjury continued unchastised.

“ Of all treasons, none can be considered worse than that which seeks the murder of the King—of your superior lord—and none can be more base than such a treason, when the King’s death is sought to be accomplished by the corruption of a servant, in whom the King has ever placed the greatest confidence.

“ Of such treason—of such baseness, combined with treason, stands accused, one of the highest rank amongst yourselves, Otho, Duke of Bavaria; and to answer that treason, Otho has been summoned here by his accuser, Egen—my faithful servant—and though not the equal in rank of Duke Otho, yet a free-born man, and whose claim to credit on his oath, none of our *scabini* would venture to reject.

“ It is to aid me in coming to a proper decision upon this cause, I have summoned you; and the necessity for doing this is the greater, as the alleged treason is affirmed to be connected with that spirit of insubordination which now rages in

Saxony, and that has already manifested itself in the refusal to pay tithes to our most reverend, exalted, and pious friend, the Prince Archbishop of Mayence."

The Archbishop of Mayence smiled when he heard these words. They served to convince him, that Henry only waited for the divorce to be pronounced, to commence collecting his tithes at the point of the sword.

Henry continued :—

“Egen, the accuser, is now here in person, and prepared to sustain his charge—he will do so, by his oath, or he is ready to prove the justice of his accusation at the peril of his life, if Otho will do battle with him. He has summoned the accused to this place. Is Otho, Duke of Saxony, present?”

“I am here to answer for Otho, Duke of Saxony—to defend him, if it be necessary—and to account for his absence, if it be required,” said Count Dedi, advancing, and placing himself in front of the throne

of Henry, so as to be visible to all parts of the assembly.

“Count Dedi is a very ardent friend,” said Henry, sneeringly; “but the time, perhaps, is not far distant when he may himself stand in need of a champion.”

“When Count Dedi,” replied the fearless old man, “ceases to prove himself a friend to those he honours, he is unworthy to live; and he never can want a champion as long as he is able to wield the sword which hangs by his side, and that has already saved him from greater dangers than a king’s sneer, or *a judge’s jibe*.”

Henry turned pale with anger at this public reproach to himself, in forgetting that in the office which he was then exercising, he was bound to exhibit the demeanour, if he had none of the spirit, that should characterise the supreme president of a judicial tribunal. He restrained himself, however, from giving expression to his feelings, and in as calm a voice as he

could assume, he said, addressing himself to Dedi :

“ Wherefore does Otho refuse to appear before his assembled peers?”

“ Otho, Duke of Bavaria,” replied Dedi, “ does not refuse to appear before his assembled peers—he is willing that his cause should be tried by them ; but by them only, and by them all, and not by a selection made from them, in which he recognizes, and I now see, many of his enemies, and few if any of those either disposed to be friendly towards him, or to judge indifferently between him and his accusers. Otho, like other men illustrious by their rank, famous by their deeds, and conspicuous by their riches, is well aware that there are many who are his enemies, because they desire to deprive him of the first, to obscure the second, and to despoil him of the third. He well knows that some desire to possess themselves of his dukedom ; others to tarnish his glory,

which they feel is a reproach to their own infamy ; and a vast number to plunder his property, and to enrich themselves by the robbery of himself, his wife, and their dependents. Otho does not refuse to be judged by a fair and impartial tribunal—by the princes of the empire assembled in a full and solemn diet at Goslar. Let your Majesty grant him a safe conduct, and then he will appear, and then upon such conditions as the princes, his equals, may impose, he pledges himself to refute to their satisfaction fully, completely, and thoroughly the infamous charges that are now preferred against him."

" But wherefore," asked Henry, " refuse the single combat with Egen ? In such a battle the judgment of God, and not the prejudices of man, to which you refer, must be the supreme arbiter, and either convict him of guilt, or vindicate his innocence."

" Otho, Duke of Bavaria, refuses the proposed monomachy with Egen, " replied Dedi, ' upon my advice, and the counsel

of other high and illustrious knights and nobles ; and he refuses it, not because Egen is his inferior in rank—that which might be a valid objection, if he did not know that on one occasion King Louis d'Outremer tendered single combat to his inferior in rank, Hugh the Great ; and if he had not in our own land the example of Dietmar, brother of Bernhard, Duke of Saxony, upon an accusation similar to that now preferred by Egen, engaging in single combat with his own vassal Arnold. Otho refuses to cross his sword with Egen upon this ground, and this only ; namely, that it is not equitable, it is not just, it is not right, it is not proper, it is not becoming, it is not even decent, to require of a man like Otho, one of the most illustrious in the empire by birth, and by rank, and still more illustrious by his personal virtues —a man of spotless fame and unblemished honour, to place himself on a level and to engage hand-in-hand with one who is notoriously a base and infamous wretch

—a villain, who, though it is admitted, is a free-born man, is still one who has degraded himself by his vices, and upon whom, if justice had been done, the hangman's gripe should long since have been laid for his thefts, his robberies, and his career of crime, into which he is so fallen, that he has become a pander even to the lusts of others. With such a wretch as Egen, it is deemed by Otho, and it is declared by his friends, that it would be an infamy for any man, under any circumstances, to recognise in him an equal either in the sight of God, or of man. This is Otho's answer at this time, in this place, and before such a tribunal, as I now see assembled, to the challenge of Egen."

As these words rung through the assembly, there arose a loud murmur of indignation amongst all the armed nobles present; for the bold speech of Dedi was a reproach to them as an unfairly constituted assembly, and yet there were few of them, who in their hearts did not approve of Otho's reasons for refusing the single com-

bat to Egen. It was felt by all to be a just refusal ; but when men are heated by passion they are blind to what is justice, and will shut their ears even to the voice of truth, if both stand in the way of the gratification of their revenge. Some of the armed Counts were so enraged by the address of Dedi, that they convulsively grasped their swords, and the rattle was heard for a moment, as if the iron scabbards had been shaken.

Such sounds were familiar to the practised ear of the veteran warrior, Dedi, and the instant they reached him, he seized the scabbard of his own sword with the left hand, but without touching the hilt with his right, he glanced proudly, and defyingly on the entire assembly, seeming to run his eye from rank to rank, as if endeavouring to detect who amongst them was the man that would prominently put himself forward as *his* antagonist.

Dedi stood in this attitude for about a minute, and as he did so, a breathless

silence fell upon all. The rattling of steel ceased, and the murmurs of voices were heard no more.

The first to break this silence was Henry, who said :

“ Is there any one in this assembly—a freeman—who will, with Count Dedi, maintain the innocence of Otho, Duke of Bavaria ? ”

“ I am here to do so,” exclaimed a voice that appeared to come from the door-way of the church, where a vast multitude were collected, that the pikes of the red *schaaren* prevented from pressing into the church in such numbers as to inconvenience those who were there assembled.

“ Permit that man, whoever he may be,” observed Henry, “ to advance to the foot of the throne so that all may hear what he has to allege on behalf of Otho, Duke of Bavaria.”

The crowd gave way, and there stood forth from the midst of them, the hardy forester, Bernhard, who walked silently up

the long aisle of the church, even until he reached the foot of Henry's throne, and there stood unabashed by the multitude of rich men he saw around him, and unshrinking even before the flushed brow and the angry eye of the King.

"Who art thou, fellow," said Henry, impatiently, when he saw the meanly clad Bernhard before him, "that thus intrudest thyself upon the quarrels of other men."

"I am Bernhard, the Forester of Aschaffenburg," answered the companion of the Pilgrim.

"Well," observed Henry, with his malignant sneer, "and what can the Forester in Aschaffenburg know of any dealings between Otho of Bavaria, and my servant Egen."

"I know this," replied Bernhard, "that Otho, Duke of Bavaria, is alike incapable of treason to your Majesty, and of the base means of effecting it, wherewith he is charged by Egen; and this I am ready to

prove by my body and my sword : I know also that your servant Egen is a villain—a base villain—I know, for I have been a witness to what I now state, that he, with an armed band of ruffians was guilty of the forcible abduction of a maiden of surpassing beauty ; she who was known by the name only of “the white rose of Aschaffenburg.” I know that the miscreant who was guilty of such a crime is capable of committing the lesser crime of perjury—and these things I am prepared to prove by my oath, by my body, and by my sword, and hence that single combat which Otho will not give to Egen, I now tender to Egen, and here in the presence of your Majesty, and of this Diet, I brand him as a recreant if he will dare to refuse it.”

There were facts referred to in this speech of Bernhard, of which it would be difficult to say what one amongst them was the most annoying to Henry to hear mentioned in that assembly. He found that even there, in that public assemblage

he was mixed up, (although not named), with the criminalities of Egen, and so unexpectedly did this exposure come upon him, that he was incapable of making an observation upon the challenge now publicly delivered against his confidant, by Bernhard.

“ Well—my lords, and princes,” said Dedi, “ what say you—what can you reply to the challenge of Bernhard ? If you deem Otho not justified in refusing the duel with Egen—how can you sanction Egen’s refusal to fight with Bernhard ?”

“ I claim the right of forbidding it,” answered Croft, the new Bishop of Hildesheim, “ and I do so on the ground, that the cases of Egen and of Bernhard are not at all similar. Egen is justified, by precedent, in claiming the right as a free-born man, in a charge of high treason, of proving that charge by single combat against one, even though his superior in rank. Bernhard claims a similar right, but he is not enabled to obtain it, and that upon two

grounds, first Bernhard is not the equal, by birth, of Egen, for Bernhard is not a free-born man—he is a serf by birth—a serf of the monastery of Aschaffenburg, a man upon whom I myself bestowed his freedom; and secondly, even supposing that objection could be waived, and I deem that it is not possible to do so; then I refer to the hundred-and-thirteenth section of the Code of Bamberg, to show that except in the charge of high treason against the King (that which Bernhard does not allege against Egen) the latter is justified in refusing the duel with him, and he may, if Bernhard were to persist in his accusation, clear himself of the charge by the oaths of sworn, credible and responsible compurgators. Does your Majesty," said Croft, turning to Henry, "think that I have interpreted rightly and justly the customs and laws of the Empire?"

"Most rightfully, most justly, and most wisely," answered the King, bestowing a most gracious smile upon the new titular

Bishop of Hildesheim. “And sustained by your interpretation, I regard the accusation of Bernhard the forester as naught. Begone, fellow,” said the King to Bernhard. “Thou art treated with more mercy than thou dost merit, when thou art permitted to depart without punishment for thus calumniating my servant Egen.”

Bernhard gazed steadily at Henry while he was thus rebuked by him as his sovereign. As soon as Henry ceased to speak, Bernhard bowed his head and was turning to depart, when Dedi seized hold of him and spoke to him in a tone of voice to be heard by all present.

“Bernhard—henceforth my friend Bernhard—stir not, for your life, out of this assembly unprotected by me and my followers. Here, neither you nor I have aught more to do. The manner in which your accusation has been disposed of, proves to me how Otho’s appeal for justice will be received. Have I,” said Dedi, in the same tone of voice, and addressing the

King, "Your Majesty's permission to depart?"

"Answer me, Count Dedi," said Henry, with a frowning brow, "but one question more, and then you are free to go."

"Let Your Majesty put your question in what form you please," observed Dedi, "my answer shall be as truly spoken as if the next moment were my last."

"Am I," said Henry, "to understand that you speak fully and distinctly the determination of Duke Otho of Bavaria, not to appear before the assembly as it is now constituted, and to decline the proof by single combat tendered by Egen? that Otho will, in fact, not condescend to defend himself except before a tribunal of his own choosing?"

"This is the answer of Otho to Your Majesty's questions," replied Dedi. "I give that answer as coming from his own lips, and in listening to my voice, you hear his words. Otho says this: he chooses no tribunal for himself—the accused, like the

accuser, should have no choice as to those by whom they are tried, and he objects to appear before this assembly, because it is, as he believes, a tribunal not merely chosen, but culled out for his condemnation, by those who are his enemies. In appealing from such a convocation to a general assembly or Diet, he but exercises a right that is vested in him as a Duke charged with high treason. He refuses to combat with Egen, because he conceives no sentence—no judgment—no condemnation that might be pronounced against him would entail upon him such a loss of honour, as that of demeaning himself for a moment in such a manner as to treat Egen on an equality with himself. Otho, Duke of Bavaria, despairs of receiving justice here—Otho Duke of Bavaria, has no hope of mercy from Your Majesty, if he were once to place himself in your hands, and therefore he prefers defending his own life and lands with arms in his hands, rather than be basely butchered and unresistingly robbed,

if he cast away from him, by coming here, such means of defence as Heaven has still left to him.

“This is Otho’s answer to your Majesty—it is his declaration to this assembly—and having now delivered myself of both, I take my leave of you.

“Come, Bernhard—and mark, as you go along, how little of honesty, and how scanty a share of virtue may, at times, be found associated with coronets of diamonds and rich robes of gold.”

So speaking, the proud Count Dedi, and the humble forester, Bernhard, walked out from the midst of that hostile assemblage, not only unscathed, but without as much as a single word of insult pronounced against them.

The rage of Henry, which had been so long suppressed, burst forth, as those two companions of Otho disappeared. It was, therefore, in a manner far different from that grave, judicial tone that he had as-

sumed at the commencement of these proceedings, that he now addressed his hearers.

“Thus, my lords, princes, archbishops, bishops, abbots, counts, have ye all been outraged, and I insulted, by a traitor ; for that Otho, Duke of Bavaria, is a traitor, I am now fully warranted in declaring—he who contumaciously refuses to defend himself before a properly constituted tribunal, when charged with a grave crime, must be regarded as self-convicted ; and he, whose treason is ready to be proved by single combat, yet shrinks from the test of battle, must be considered as much a traitor as if he had accepted the combat, and had been defeated by his adversary. If it were otherwise, the proud traitor never could be convicted, and the coward traitor never be condemned. To you then, I appeal for that justice which you are bound to render against the man thus self-convicted of treason against me, as well as

of basely attempting to effect that treason, by seeking to corrupt my faithful servant, so that he might have the means of depriving me of life.

“If other evidence beyond these facts—the contumacy and the cowardice of Otho—now within the knowledge of each and all of you, be required, Egen is ready to produce it, and, among the rest, the sword of Attila, once the property of Otho, bestowed, by him, on Egen, and now in the possession of Count Rutger.”

The King ceased speaking. The nobles rose in a body, and retired from the church. They were absent for about a quarter of an hour, and then the King’s Master of the Household, with his golden wand of office in his right hand, arose, and said:—

“This is the doom of the nobles, princes, and counts of the Empire. We condemn Otho, Duke of Bavaria, as one plainly, clearly, and openly convicted of

high-treason—for that treason we condemn him to death—and to death we consign him whenever, wheresoever, or by whomsoever he is apprehended. This is our doom, and we pray your Majesty to sanction and enforce it."

"I approve it, and I will enforce it," said Henry. "I declare Otho, from this moment, deprived of the dukedom of Bavaria; and I authorise all who hear me, to waste, with fire and sword, the lands belonging to him, and the persons who acknowledge him as their superior lord.

"Thanks, loyal, faithful, and true nobles, counts, and princes; and now I would say to you, that you are free to go; but that I entreat you may tarry, yet a little longer, until you hear the judgment pronounced by our trusty Archbishop of Mayence, upon a case of conscience submitted to him, and the other prelates, touching the dissolution of the ill-assorted marriage which has, for some time, nominally subsisted between Queen Bertha and myself.

“Now, Archbishop of Mayence,” whispered Henry to Sigefrid, “now prove that you are a friend to your King—remember the Saxon and the Thuringian tithes.”

“Your Majesty shall find I have done my utmost to content you,” replied Sigefrid, rising from his seat, and preparing himself to address the assembly.

At this moment, and before the opportunity was afforded to Sigefrid of giving utterance to another word, there burst forth a shout of joy, so loud, so vehement, and so sudden, that the painted windows of the church seemed to tremble in their soldered frames from the concussion. To those who sat within the walls of the church, it appeared as if every inhabitant of Frankfort, and the thousands in the tents around it, had uplifted, at the same instant, their voices in one united acclamation, and that all combined together, came like a thunder-clap of exultation upon their ears. It was a shout of joy, in which there appeared to be no pause, and to which there never

again would be a cessation, for as it was prolonged, it seemed to increase in vehemence, making the nerves of the hearers tremble, and compelling them, by the contagion of excitement, to join in it! Onward it came, swelling with a louder roar, as if that which had first provoked it, was approaching nearer and nearer to the building in which the King held his parliament.

King Henry, the archbishop, bishops, and nobles, with every one in the assembly, started to their feet, as they heard this tremendous shout, and all remained rivetted to the spot on which they stood, as if astounded by so vehement an outburst of popular joy, and popular enthusiasm. There was no cry to indicate to them wherefore it had arisen, or, on whose behalf it was produced, but onward, onward still it came to them, increasing in noise, and more awful in its dizzying sound, and then—it ceased as suddenly as it began—and there was a silence as of

death, as the door-way was cleared, and the multitude outside were seen with bended knees, and faces upturned with joy.

“Alack! alack!” exclaimed the Archbishop of Mayence, imitating the attitude of those who stood outside—“I see it all—I know now *the cause* of this tumult. We are lost, King Henry.”

“Good Heavens! what is it? What can it be?” enquired the King.

“It is *the Papal Legate*! The shouts were for joy at seeing him—the silence has ensued upon his descending to the ground. See, the people are crossing themselves. The Legate is bestowing upon them his benediction.

“To your knees,” said the Archbishop of Mayence, “King, prelates, nobles, christians—to your knees, in order that our first greeting from Rome may be a benediction from his Holiness. God grant we may all receive it with a humble and

contrite heart. Kneel—kneel, all of ye—  
See, he comes."

"The Papal Legate!" muttered Henry.  
"Curses fall on whomsoever has brought  
him."

"Then curse Dedi the younger,"  
whispered Werenher in the ear of the  
King.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE RECONCILIATION.

ONE of the most remarkable men of the eleventh century was the Papal Legate, whose unexpected and unlooked for appearance on this occasion at Frankfort produced so much terror to the Court, and excited such emotion in the Parliament convoked by Henry. This Papal Legate was the Cardinal, and Bishop of Ostia, Peter Damian—a poet, a philosopher, a profound scholar; an author, whose works

are still read with admiration—a man whose benevolence was boundless, and his charity so great that he had been known to part even with his pontifical ring, when all his other means were exhausted to procure money and food for the poor—a man who was most respected, and most feared by his contemporaries, on account of his unceasing, and uncompromising efforts as a *Church Reformer*—a man so stern in his principles, that he declared all ecclesiastics to be guilty of manifold simony, who served princes, or flattered them for the sake of obtaining ecclesiastical preferments.

The great vice of the age in which Peter Damian lived was the simony which infected Churchmen, and that prevailed to such an extent that it had become a universal practice in Milan, as that bishops were paid for bestowing ordination upon those who sought to be admitted to holy orders. Against this sin of simony which overspread the Church as

a leprosy, and that brought with it many other sins and enormities, Peter Damian arrayed himself. He denounced it as “a heresy,” and backed by the power of his superiors, he suppressed it completely in Milan, checked it in France, aided in extirpating it from all parts of Italy, and struggled against it in Germany.

The vehemence of language that Peter Damian used in denouncing a sin destructive to Christianity, and yet much favored by men of the highest rank in Church and State, who profitted by it, contrasted strongly with his own great humility, with his belief in his own unworthiness, with his severe fasts, and with the bitter mortifications that he imposed upon himself as a punishment for what he believed to be his own sins; for it is stated of him by his biographers that the ordinary course of his life, when not employed in discharging the duty of “Reforming the Church,” so frequently confided to him, by those who

had authority over him, was as follows :—

“ He lived,” say his biographers, “ shut up in his cell as in a prison—fasted every day—except festivals—and allowed himself no other subsistence than coarse bread, bran, herbs, and water, and this he never drank fresh, but what he had kept from the day before. He tortured his body with iron girdles, and frequent disciplines, to render it more obedient to the spirit. He passed the three first days of every Lent and Advent, without taking any kind of nourishment whatsoever ; and often, for forty days together, lived only on raw herbs and fruits, or on pulse steeped in cold water, without touching so much as bread, or anything which had passed the fire. A mat spread on the floor was his bed. He used to make wooden spoons and such like useful mean things, to exercise himself at certain hours in manual labour.”

Such then was the man—so pious—so

“poor in spirit,”—so great in learning—so ardent in zeal—so meek with the humble—so gentle with the contrite—and so harsh with the reprobate—that now appeared to the horror of Sigefrid, the worldly Archbishop of Mayence, and to the dismay of Henry the mighty and the great King of Germany, in the midst of their assistant prelates and proud nobles collected together in the Parliament of Frankfort.

The Bishop Cardinal of Ostia, had bestowed his benediction upon the vast multitude assembled outside the walls of the church, and then arrayed in the sumptuous robes of a “Bishop-Cardinal,” the feeble old man, now in the seventy-ninth year of his age, was seen entering the church, preceded by acolytes, by priests in white vestments—by the bearer of a great silver cross, and having but one man in armour in his train—that warrior was at once recognised by all present, to be the youthful,

gallant, and high-spirited, son of Count Dedi.

The Bishop-Cardinal passed up the centre of the church—now so still and silent, and lately so agitated by vehement passions, that the men who now, lowly bent to receive his blessing, appeared not to be the same vehement, rash, and angry individuals that were ready to throw themselves a short time before, sword in hand, upon Count Dedi, and cut him to pieces, for daring to reproach them with their subser-  
vency to King Henry.

The benediction of the Papal Legate was bestowed, and then all arose ; and as they did so, Peter Damian, touching with his aged, pale, and withered cheek, the bloom-  
ing, fresh-coloured cheek of the youthful monarch, bestowed upon him, that which, in the language of churchmen, is designated “the kiss of peace.”

A strange sight it was to behold them thus—even though it were but for a single in-

stant—brought in immediate and direct contact with each other—so great a saint, and so great a sinner, as Peter Damian and Henry. The one had passed from youth to age, and now stood upon the verge of the grave, so chastising his body, and so checking and controlling all his passions and his inclinations, that he was, even whilst on earth, an almost spiritualized being ; whilst the other, indulged by others from infancy, and yielding himself a prey to every caprice, had become, even though still young, an animal in his passions, and worse than an animal, because to gratify those passions he employed the devices, and resorted to the practises of a clever and an unscrupulous man.

“Your Majesty will perceive by the Rescript I have now the honour of placing in your hands, that all the reasons you have alleged for desiring to put an end to the marriage with the Queen Bertha, have been fully, deliberately, and anxiously, considered, by his Holiness. These, I believe,”

said Peter Damian, handing a parchment to King Henry, “contain all the facts and all the arguments on which you rely, for the dissolution of your marriage. I have some reason for supposing they are those upon which the Prince Archbishop of Mayence intended to rely, in pronouncing a judgment in favour of your Majesty. He could not, I believe, put them in a stronger light than they are here set forth.”

Henry and the Archbishop of Mayence, at the same moment, fixed their eyes on the Papal Legate, in the hope they might discover in his countenance some indication of *his* feelings upon a point in which both were so deeply interested. They looked in vain, for the face of the old man was as pale as passive, and as free from every emotion as if it were that of a marble statue. They then examined the parchment that had been placed in their hands. Henry’s face flushed with joy as he read it, and the Archbishop felt delighted as he perused.

“My reasons,” whispered the Archbishop

to Henry, “could not have been placed in a stronger light than they are here set down. I cannot understand how it is; but, most assuredly, this document has anticipated all that I could have said.”

“And it contains,” whispered Henry to the Archbishop, “all that I wished to have said.” And he muttered involuntarily, to himself, “and it contains, too, much more than I could have proved.”

The Legate waited patiently—absolutely unmoved, until the document had been carefully conned over. He then said—

“Does any new fact or argument occur to you, that your Majesty would desire to have added to what is there set down for you?”

“No—none,” replied Henry. “I am perfectly content with it, and I am sure that upon such a case I shall have a just, fair, and impartial decision made by his Holiness.”

“Of that Your Majesty may well feel assured,” replied the Legate, “for His

Holiness feels as anxious for your temporal and eternal happiness as if you were his son—his love for you is greater than that of a father for his child ; for he is well aware that Your Majesty has it in your power to confer innumerable blessings upon that Christendom of which he is on this earth the spiritual father.”

“ And the holy Father may henceforth reckon upon me as the most devoted of his kingly sons. In the document I have now read, I have the proof he has considered and attached their due weight to all those conscientious scruples that influence me in seeking a divorce from her who has been but in name my wife.”

So spoke Henry, in buoyant spirits, to the Legate.

“ The Holy Father has done so, for he considers himself in this case responsible for your immortal soul to God,” answered Peter Damian. “ He has deemed the facts you state to be so important, that he has instituted a rigid inquiry into them.”

“What!” exclaimed Henry, “inquired into the validity of facts alleged by me to be true?”

“Yes,” answered Peter Damian, in the same unmoved attitude and the same calm tone of voice; “for he is aware that kings are but men—that as men they are liable to be mistaken; and that *as men* they will be judged hereafter. He has examined into the facts, and he has found them disproved, every one, by the clearest evidence—and among the rest, by the evidence of the Empress Agnes, your mother, and of Queen Bertha, your wife. Here are the facts as set forth by you, with the proofs that they are directly contradicted by the oaths of those who had the opportunity of having full cognizance of the truth.”

So speaking, Peter Damian handed another parchment to Henry and the Archbishop of Mayence. The first merely glanced through it—the latter read it attentively, and as he did so, he was seen to tremble as if he were shaken with an ague-fit.

“Then what, may I ask,” said Henry impatiently, “is the decision to which the Pontiff has come?”

“His Majesty, King Henry of Germany,” observed Peter Damian, here raising his voice and addressing himself to the entire assembly, “is pleased to demand of me what is the decision of His Holiness with respect to His Majesty’s demand that the marriage contracted between him and the Princess Bertha, of Italy, be dissolved. His Majesty admits that the reasons in support of, and in opposition to his demand have been fully and maturely considered, and I have now in the name, and on behalf of the Supreme Pontiff, to pronounce publicly, as I am so directed by His Holiness, the judgement in this case.

“The Pontiff considers that a marriage has been legally, fully, and rightfully solemnised between His Majesty King Henry, and the Queen Bertha—that it is a marriage in every way unimpeachable, and therefore indissoluble; and that to

seek for the dissolution of such a marriage, or to permit it to be dissolved would be pernicious, contrary to morality, and an act worthy of execration by every man who bears the name of a Christian.

“ The Pontiff, moreover, in giving this decision, publicly appeals to King Henry, that supposing he was to set the laws of man at defiance, and to trample upon the Canons of the Church, by putting an end to a lawful marriage, he should at least have some regard for the estimation in which he is to be held now, and his fame in all future time, and this too lest the evil example of seeking divorces thus given by a King, should be hereafter imitated, and Christendom contaminated with a new crime, of which he should stand for ever accursed as the inventor and the originator.

“ The Pontiff, in conclusion, declares that he never will with his hands bestow consecration as an Emperor upon King Henry—if Henry as King should, by persisting in a divorce from his wife, so far

betray the faith that binds him as a Christian, and thus afford so pestilent an example to others.

“ This is the judgment of the Pontiff in Your Majesty’s cause—this the Pontiff’s appeal to you—this the Pontiff’s declaration of the course he will himself adopt, supposing that you should condemn his judgment, and pay no regard to his appeal.

“ With the declaration and expounding of the judgment of His Holiness, I am instructed also to say, that my functions as a Pontifical Legate cease.

“ Having discharged myself of that duty—I no longer stand before your Majesty the representative of a Sovereign Prince; but I pray that you will forget that I am a Cardinal—that I am a Bishop—that I am anything more than a humble and an obscure monk, who has been ordered by his superior for a few days to quit his cell, and who has reluctantly, although readily, obeyed that order to be the bearer of a

message to the mightiest and the greatest King in the world.

“ I pray then of your Majesty to deign to listen to the words of a humble monk of the desert hermitage of Font-Avellano—of Peter Damian, who now kneels at the feet of your Majesty”—(and as he spoke these words the feeble old man knelt before the proud Sovereign)—“ and who does so to seek for no favour from you but this—that you will have compassion on—*yourself*: that discarding your inclinations, and mortifying your propensities, you will permit your conscience to be heard, and religion to pour her saving counsels into your ear—that you will yield obedience to the Church which tells you that you must cleave to your own wife, and that those whom God has joined *no man* can put asunder.

“ Receive—oh! receive again to your heart your true, fond, faithful, and devoted wife Bertha—restore her to your affections, and deem all others of her sex as undeserving of a moment’s contemplation ;

for she alone is your wife, and he, who is a husband, should esteem all other women but as his mother, his sister, or his daughter.

“ This is my prayer to you—it is but the prayer of an old man—but remember it is the prayer of one, from whose sight this world is fast disappearing; of one, upon whom it can bestow no reward, and to whom it can offer no temptation—that it is the prayer of one, who may be regarded as speaking from his grave ; for a grave is all that even you—potent prince as you are—could now bestow upon the poor, feeble, aged Peter Damian.

“ My only prayer to your Majesty is, that you obey the Church in becoming reconciled to your wife Bertha.

“ And ye, oh brother-bishops, fellow-priests, and mighty dukes, counts, and nobles, I beseech of you to imitate my example. Cast yourselves with me at the feet of your sovereign, and pray of him that for the good of mankind, whom his

example must influence, and for his soul's sake, that should be more dear to him than his kingly crown, that he will comply with your request, as well as mine, by becoming openly and cordially reconciled with your queen—the good and virtuous Bertha."

The times that we are attempting to describe were times, as we have already intimated, in which there were great vices; but they were also times in which there was great faith—times in which an appeal, coming from an old man, (famous for his personal virtues, and of whose disinterestedness no one ever entertained a doubt), could not be made without being responded to. Hence it happened, that no sooner had Peter Damian ceased to speak than all the members of the Diet were seen prostrate before the throne of Henry, and all exclaiming, as if with one voice :

“ Amen! amen! to the prayer of the Bishop Cardinal. We beseech the king to be reconciled to Queen Bertha.”

These words were as the points of daggers in the flesh of Henry--they came upon him at a moment when he felt assured of the full success of that divorce which he had passed years in concocting ; and they now rushed upon him as the hurricane does upon the frail cane-constructed cottage shivering it into atoms, and rendering all chance of its re-erection with the same materials, an utter impossibility.

Henry, in his despair, when he heard himself so addressed by those whom he knew to be his surest friends, because in all matters his most compliant adherents, threw himself back in his throne, covered his face with his imperial robes, and wept —wept these bitter tears which wicked men shed when they find that their plots are baffled, and their passions thwarted—tears, that as they fall bring no relief to the heart, but seem as drops of fire, from which spring forth the hell-born demons, hatred, malice, and ven-

geance, against all, and upon all, who have contributed to their defeat and disappointment.

Thus wept Henry when the weak, sinning, avaricious, but for the moment, repentant, Archbishop of Mayence rose to address the assembly.

“Before his Majesty answers the appeal now made to him,” said Sigefrid, “I would wish him to hear the words of one, that he knows to be a true, loyal, and devoted subject. I can say, as Archbishop of Mayence, that his Majesty, who is a very pious prince, did appeal to me with respect to his conscientious scruples regarding his marriage with Queen Bertha. The facts upon which these scruples were founded, were submitted to me—and they seemed to me to be so cogent, that I consulted with other Bishops upon them, and the conclusion we came to was, that the King had a right to the relief he sought for. Now, however, that I have had the oppor-

tunity of seeing Queen Bertha's reply to his Majesty's allegations, I am bound to declare that the decision of the Roman Pontiff is perfectly equitable—that any other would have been an unjust decision—that to grant a divorce—such as the King has sought for, would be alike sinful and profane ; and, therefore, I do beseech his Majesty, in the name of God, not to persist in his demand—because, to do so, would be to tarnish his own glory, and to disgrace, by an infamous act, his royal name, and dignity as a sovereign prince : and I would further warn him, and I hope he will understand that warning in the sense in which I give utterance to it—that if, under the circumstances in which this question is now placed, his Majesty should repudiate his wife, then it would be considered by her relatives, men possessed of great wealth, and having immense military resources, that just cause was afforded to them of rising in insurrection

against him—and, perhaps, of casting the entire affairs of the Empire into irremediable confusion. Rome," said Sigefrid, addressing himself to Henry, "has decided against your Majesty—its decision is just—religion now commands your submission to that decision ; and even, if no motive of piety influenced you, prudence and policy, and a regard for your own interests, should be instigators to urge you to yield a speedy and a ready obedience."

These words of Sigefrid produced far more effect upon the mind of Henry than the appeal, or the prayer of Peter Damian—for the latter had only appealed to his religious feelings, and the former to his personal interests and advantage. He perceived that no other resource was left to him but simulation ; and the moment that conviction reached his mind, he determined to adopt it.

Henry rose from his throne, and with the voice and manner of a man who has been told unpleasant tidings, and has de-

terminated to bear them with patience, he said—

“ I pray of you, most reverend Cardinal, and Bishop of Ostia, to rise from your knees—it is not fitting that one so old should bow down before one so young as I am—it is not becoming that one so pious should kneel to one so frail—and you, too, my revered prelates and loving subjects, I pray you all to resume your places, and listen to the words of your sovereign.

“ It would be hypocrisy in me, if I were to say that the decision which Rome has come to with respect to the divorce I sought, is not only a grievous disappointment, but a severe trial to my feelings. I admit—I avow that it is so. If it were not, there would be little merit in my compliance with the prayer you have made to me.

“ With that request, it is my intention to comply. I will comply with it, not merely outwardly, but thoroughly. You

have asked me to become reconciled to my Queen. I shall do so ; for it is, I conceive, the duty of a King to yield assent to the prayers of his loyal, loving, and devoted subjects—even though his so doing may be the cause of much affliction to himself.

“In asking me to be reconciled to Bertha, you place a heavy yoke upon my shoulders ; but I submit to it, and will bear it as best I can. You, yourselves shall be the witnesses how perfect that reconciliation can be made.

“In obedience to my orders, Queen Bertha now awaits, in the oratory, the decision of the Bishops. I desire that my trusty vassal, Dedi the younger, may conduct her from thence into the church. I send to her one, who will, I am sure, be *most welcome to her.*”

An almost imperceptible smile curled the lip of Henry, as he accented these words. It was not perceived by any other than the keen eye of Peter Damain. It

induced the Papal legate to approach Henry, and to whisper in his ear these words—

“ I pray your Majesty’s pardon ; but I feel bound to tell you, that I fear you are not acting with that sincerity you profess. Remember, that you stand in the Church of God, and that of all sinners those who have the least chance of ever attaining to the grace of sincere repentance, are those who would mock Heaven by hypocrisy. For your own sake beware ; better defy the Church openly, than by seeking to delude it, deliver yourself over irreversibly to perdition. It is not in reproach, but in pure love to you, I say this.”

“ Most excellent man !” replied the smiling, and apparently grateful Henry. “ I know not how to thank you for the anxious care you have for my salvation. I feel assured that it is in the purest charity you speak to me ; but be you now yourself the judge of my sincerity. Here

comes our Queen Bertha—see, if there be aught to censure in my demeanour towards her. If there be, I am sure you will point out the error, and I, for my part, shall endeavour to amend it."

As Henry spoke thus he descended the steps of the throne, and proceeded to meet Bertha as she advanced with trembling steps, and, from sheer weakness and emotion, clung for support to the arm of her conductor, the younger Dedi.

Bertha, clothed in a robe of black, destitute of every ornament, and her head covered with a thick black veil, ascended the steps of the throne, aided by her husband. As soon as both had reached the topmost steps, he placed the Queen on the throne which he had so lately occupied, whilst he himself remained standing by her side.

There was complete silence in the church whilst all this was passing ; and there was terror in the heart of those who knew

Henry best, lest this silence should be but a prelude to some scene of horror.

The silence was so chilling that it appeared terrible even to those who might be regarded but as indifferent spectators. What then must have been its effect upon the poor Queen, who was alone, in that multitude of terrified men, and who found all eyes fixed upon her !

Henry beckoned the Archbishop of Mayence, and then Werenher to his side, and whispered a few words in the ear of each. The last was seen to leave the church ; the Archbishop, it was remarked, brought from the high altar a rich coronet composed of amethysts.

The silence still continued unbroken ; but when the Archbishop had returned to the side of Henry, the latter thus addressed the assembly :

“ My loving friends and faithful subjects, you are all now aware that I made an appeal to the Church with respect to my

doubts as to the validity of my marriage with the Princess Bertha of Italy ; and expecting that the decision upon that appeal would be publicly delivered this day, I desired that her Majesty should be here, in order that both might yield obedience to it, whatever it might be. Had the Church decided for my divorce, I would have called upon her Majesty to submit to it ; and I am well aware that so great is her piety, and so paramount to all other considerations, her child-like obedience to the Church, that she would have done so.

“ I have now, my loving friends, and faithful subjects, to give you the proof that what in the one case I expected from her Majesty, I have now in the other, myself to perform. The Church has declared that my scruples are vain — that my marriage is valid, and that it is my duty to become publicly reconciled to my wife.

“ She is here that I may do so. With my own hands I have placed her on my own throne — and doing so, I acknowledge

that if virtue unimpeachable, morality that is unquestioned, purity that would become a convent, and goodness that is unchangeable, could bring happiness to a crown, and joy to a married King, Bertha possesses all those qualifications in a pre-eminent degree.

“ In your presence, and before all the world, I acknowledge her as my Queen, and as my wife, and I now bid you all to repeat the words wherewith I greet her :—God save Queen Bertha, the wife of Henry IV., King of Germany !”

For the first time, the solemn and mournful silence that had prevailed in the Church, was broken by the cheer that now burst out from all sides, as each one present repeated, and apparently with a hearty good will, the words—

“ God save Queen Bertha, the wife of Henry IV. King of Germany !”

“ And now,” continued Henry, “ it is not fitting that she, whom the brave and warlike race of Germans, acknowledge as their

Queen, should conceal her countenance from them. It is right that they should behold that beauteous face, which is henceforth to reward the best deeds of their gallant knights, with a gracious smile."

As Henry spoke these words, he removed the thick, dark veil which had, up to this moment, shaded the features of Bertha ; and as he did so, all (but Henry) were shocked at beholding the bloodless, corpse-like, face of the Queen—rendered still more pale and ghastly by the ebony ringlets that shaded it, and by the expression of terror and of fear that were in the eye, and on her trembling lips. But why was Queen Bertha at such a moment, a spectacle for men to commiserate, when it might be supposed that her brilliant dark eyes would have sparkled with pleasure, at being thus publicly recognised as the rightful wife, and lawful Queen of Henry ? It is a matter easy of

explanation. Bertha, as the wife of Henry, knew him well. Whilst his words were pleasant to the ear of others, and his voice full of those sweet tones that seemed to be the echoes of truthfulness and candour ; Bertha had looked into his eyes, and she saw that there was not in them one single sparkle of returning affection for her—that her husband was but acting a part—and that he actually exposed her face to the view of his subjects, at that moment, for the mere purpose of impressing their minds with the notion of her being an ill-favored woman, and thus entitling himself to greater admiration and respect, for consenting, in obedience to the commands of the Church, to take her back, and treat her as his wife.

Such were the reflections that passed through the mind of Bertha, or rather, such were the feelings that oppressed her heart ; that sent such an icy chill, like that of death, through every limb ; and that deprived her

for the moment, of all those personal charms with which nature had gifted her.

Henry rejoiced to behold her look so unlike herself, and, determined to add to her embarrassment, he took the amethyst coronet from the Archbishop of Mayence, and again addressed the assembly :

“ I rejoice to find the wife, and the Queen, that our Holy Mother, the Church, has thus, in its goodness, bestowed upon me so cordially greeted, and so loyally hailed by my loving friends, and faithful subjects. Her Majesty, in her humility, and awaiting the decision of the Church has, I perceive, with her own hands, disarrayed herself of that diamond circlet that denoted her royal rank. Given back to the king by religion, it is but fitting that religion should supply her with a crown, and that her husband’s hands should place that crown upon her fair, meek, and gentle brow.”

So speaking, Henry placed upon the

Queen the coronet of amethyst, a species of jewellery that he well knew Bertha disliked as one most unsuited to her naturally dark skin ; but which now, shining out from her jet black hair, and contrasting with her corpse-like complexion, assumed the appearance of dark drops of blood that were oozing from her brain.

The effect was far different from that which Henry had intended. He had thus purposed to make his wife look ugly ; but, there was such suffering, such sorrow, and such grief displayed in every feature, and those so truly typified by the coronet he had bestowed upon her, and she appeared beneath his hand, so truly that which she was—a young, faithful, and virtuous wife, made a martyr by her husband—that an unrestrainable burst of pity, and of admiration for her, saluted his ears from all parts of the church.

Henry looked again at Bertha. He, at once, discovered the mistake he had made ;

for he perceived, that he had converted the hateful form of his wife into the living image of one of the young female martyrs in the early ages of the church, before whom even the devout might kneel, and beg the intercession of her prayers. Henry determined, if it were possible, to remove this impression, or to convert it, if he could, to his own advantage, and he, therefore, continued to address the assembly :—

“ I have now fulfilled the directions of the church. I have openly acknowledged Bertha as my Queen : I have become publicly reconciled to her as my wife ; but I have not as yet indulged my own feelings, by showing how readily, how willingly, and how heartily I submit to that decision. It was upon a scruple of conscience I alone separated from her : that scruple is now removed, and, be ye all now witnesses, with what tender love, and with what devoted affection I now receive her back, to treat her with all the love, tender-

ness, devotion, and affection that a fond husband should ever shew for a true-hearted, tender, and virtuous wife."

As Henry spoke these words, he stooped down, and kissed the hands, the cheeks, and the lips of his still trembling wife. No sooner did those assembled behold Henry thus embracing, with such seeming affection, his queen, than there arose a hearty, joyous cheer, from all, with the cry :

" Long life and happiness to our good King Henry and the virtuous Queen Bertha."

" King Henry," said Peter Damian, " I must now take my leave of you. I have fulfilled my mission. I am bound to state to his Holiness, that you have strictly and literally complied with his judgment—that you have, as a King, and as a husband, given that example which becomes your exalted rank and high position in this world, by restoring your wife to a throne which she adorns with the virtues

of a saint. Love her as a wife, and as a friend, and I can predict to you a life of honor, and the death-bed of the just. I will not warn you, as to what, not only may, but certainly will befall you, if you act otherwise ; because, to do so, would be to suppose that you would condescend to deceive a weak, old man like me, and such devoted subjects as I see before me. I give to you, to your wife, and to all present, the Apostolical benediction, and in doing so, I venture to suggest, that all here present, should, with myself, depart, so that you and the Queen may, alone, and before the high altar of this church, renew your marriage vow ; that you there bind yourselves each to the other, to 'love, honor, and cherish,' the wife the husband, and the husband his wife, so that the days of both may be days of peace and virtue, and the last hours of both be crowned with the blessing of immortality.

“ Farewell !” said Peter Damian. “ Fare-

well, to your Majesties, and to all. As to you, Prince Archbishop of Mayence, it is necessary I should speak with you in private. I am now repairing to the mansion of Count Dedi. Will you do me the favor of accompanying me?"

"I obey your wish, as if it were a command," replied Sigefrid.

When the Cardinal Legate, and the Archbishop of Mayence had, with their attendants, quitted the church, Henry turned to the Prelates, and the nobles who remained, and said :

"That which the holy Bishop Cardinal has suggested is just. Queen Bertha and I will remain here. As to you, my friends, you may depart each to his own home ; for I desire that you, bishops as well as nobles, should meet me this day month at Goslar. A rebellion is about to break forth in Saxony, which it will require all the military strength of the Empire to suppress.

"Farewell then until we met at Goslar, when I shall require that each man will

bring with him all the knights and warriors wherewith he is bound to appear before his King, when engaged in an enterprise pregnant with danger, and beset with difficulty. Farewell."

In a few minutes afterwards the crowded church was cleared, and where numbers had before been seated or stood, not one was visible.

The great door of the church was then closed, and the soldiers of the King stood around it, on the outside as guards, so that no stranger might, unquestioned, approach its walls.

In the church there was no one but King Henry and Queen Bertha. They were alone—quite alone!

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SEPARATION.

HENRY and Bertha were quite alone. Beneath the eyes of both were the deserted benches so lately occupied by prelates and princes, and around them, on every side, the various chapels of different saints with their marble altars, their rich ornaments and their gilded pictures; with here and there a statue of a martyr; whilst in front of them was the high altar dazzling from the precious stones that covered its taber-

nacle, and before which the burning lamps demonstrated that it contained That Which is more precious than all the kingdoms, crowns, and principalities of this world. To the believers of those times that burning lamp, before the tabernacle, was an indication that they were in the presence of One before whom every human passion should be hushed, to Whom the repentant sinner might flee with confidence, and hope ; and by Whom the whole race of mankind shall yet be judged.

Such was the faith of Bertha, the wife of Henry—Such too was his faith, but with this distinction between them, that her faith guided her conduct, and he buried his faith beneath his passions.

The first act of both on this occasion proved how differently their faith influenced them. No sooner had the great door of the church been closed, and the solemn silence that ensued convinced Henry and Bertha that they were perfectly alone, than she rose from the throne in which she had,

until that moment, remained seated, and, descending the steps, she advanced in front of the altar—and then fixing her eyes upon the tabernacle, she spoke a prayer that was not heard on this earth, but that ascended as a song of triumph to Heaven; for it was the prayer of one, who accepted her trials with humility, and who devoutly submitted to all the sufferings she might endure as offerings, which it was the Divine Will she should make, and that she readily tendered, because it was in the Order of Providence that they should be undergone. Despised, and even mocked at by her husband, she declared, in her prayer, that she would still struggle to win him back to herself, and to virtue; and should misfortune overtake him, and the world abandon him, then prove to him, that she—the repudiated wife—was his steadiest supporter, his only consoler, and his most devoted friend.

Bertha lived to know that a portion of the prayer she then made was permitted

to be realized as far as she herself was concerned.

Henry, the moment that the Church was given up to perfect solitude, and that he knew there was none but God to witness the interview between him and Bertha, flung himself down upon the throne-like seat that had been erected for his friend the Archbishop of Mayence. Galled by disappointment, heated and fatigued by the exertion he had made to conceal the bitterness of his spirit, and disgusted even with himself for his hypocrisy, and the falseness that there had been, both in his words and actions, when human eyes were looking at him, there came over his spirit and even his body that sickening feeling of all-absorbing lassitude that frequently besets the popular actor, when he has over-excited himself in some great histrionic performance. His hopes of a divorce from Bertha, and of a marriage with Beatrice were, he saw, for ever blasted ; and they were so through the instrumentality he

perceived of his mother, of Bertha, of Dedi the younger, and of Rome. There was no joy left for him but that of vengeance—and vengeance he swore he would have upon them all. The daily affliction in his power to cause his mother and his wife he resolved should become a life-long punishment to both ; the life of the younger Dedi, he resolved upon taking ; whilst as to Rome—as to the Pope of Rome, he believed that in Croft, the new Bishop of Hildesheim, he had discovered the ready, and the fitting instrument for carrying out his revenge.

Such were the desperate projects that were passing confusedly, and in a semi-diaphanous form through the brain of Henry ; bearing with them, though not yet distinctly traced out, tears, afflictions, blood and misery to those he detested ; because his wishes had been thwarted, and his schemes baffled by them. In his parching thirst for vengeance he forgot the place in which he stood, and that his

wife was by his side. He was aroused from his reverie, by feeling her hands, cold as the marble on which she had been so lately kneeling, clasping one of his, by hearing her voice, and by perceiving her meek eyes looking up to him.

“ Well—Bertha,” he said, snatching his hand rudely from her grasp, as if there was contamination in her touch, “ you have succeeded—you have triumphed over and you have punished me.”

“ Punished you, Henry! I know not what you mean,” said Bertha.

“ Aye! punished me,” observed Henry, “ visited me with a punishment far more severe than any other that earth, heaven, or hell could afflict me with—the punishment of having to acknowledge you as my wife.”

“ Oh! Henry—Henry,” piteously exclaimed Bertha.

“ Nay worse than that,” continued the remorseless king, “ condemned me—the

Church has condemned me to live as a husband *with you*."

"Listen to me, Henry," said Bertha. "Listen to me calmly: for I will not give you back taunt for taunt; remember these three things: that you are a king, that you are a knight, that you are a man; that as a king, you have sworn an oath that you would be the protector of your subjects. I am the first of these subjects; be then my protector. Remember that as the head of the Swabian knighthood you are bound to permit no man who bears a shield, sword or spear to injure a woman, be she maiden, or wife, or widow; and, oh! bear in mind you have wooed me as a maiden, and that though your wife, I have, even in your palace, passed my days in the desolation of widowhood: as a knight of Swabia I appeal to you, against yourself. And oh! Henry, remember that you are a man, and I who now stand by your side, am your wife—a

stranger in a land of strangers : protect me then, Henry, or, if you will not do so, spare me your taunts for I dare not retort upon you ; and do not cast upon me your reproaches ; for I have not deserved them."

" What ! not deserved them !" exclaimed Henry, making now no disguise of the furious rage that inflamed him. " Have you not appealed to the Pontiff against my claim for a divorce ?"

" I did so," meekly answered Bertha, " because I could not in conscience consent to see you do that, which would have involved the commission of many sins."

" Oh ! your conscience," sneeringly remarked Henry, " would not permit you to see yourself divested of the state, pomp, and dignity of a Queen, even though you knew that, as my wife, you were most odious to me."

" You wrong me, Henry," replied Bertha. " How little I care for the state and dignity of a Queen I have already shewn ; for, from the first moment that I heard

you contemplated a divorce, I divested myself of every vestige of royalty, and I have since lived in the humble garb of a religious—the life to which I would have devoted myself, had your suit been successful. I opposed the divorce for your sake, and for my own: for your sake, because it could only be obtained by perjury—an awful sin—in the guilt of which, you know, I would be as completely involved, by a criminal silence, as by a criminal assent. I opposed the divorce then on that ground, and next, because, I was aware that, if obtained, it would have led you to other, and greater sins—a sacrilegious marriage, and a life of adultery, with the pure and incomparable Beatrice."

Henry started, when he heard that name pronounced by the lips of Bertha. He made no observation, however; and Bertha proceeded—

"I opposed the divorce, also, on my own account—as necessary to prove, that I, a princess of a royal race, was unimpeach-

able in my conduct both as a maiden and as a wife. This much, at least, I owed to the parents who gave me life—and this much I owed to God, who had permitted me to be baptised a member of His church. You say, that I am odious to you as a wife. Wherefore? If it be, that I am divested of personal beauty, I cannot but approve your judgment—but that I am now, such as I was, when you accepted me as your wife, and when you vowed before God, and man, to ‘love’ me. And, Henry—dear Henry—I know you did love me once—but oh! it was for too brief a period. And pardon, Henry, a woman’s vanity; but I cannot avoid saying that I have seen more than one of these wicked women on whom you have bestowed your affections, that even I could not conceal from myself were as far my inferiors, in personal charms, as they were in virtue.

“ Ah! there it is,” cried the brutal Henry. “ It is that very virtue of which you boast that renders you odious to me.

Why is it that you now approach me—that you seek to clasp my hand—that you would, if I permitted it, fondle upon me—not because you love me, as those women, you allude to, love me—for *myself*. You do all these things, because *your virtue*, of which you boast, urges you to do it—because it is, you conceive, *your duty*—because *religion* commands it. As a king, and as a man, I am hateful to you—as odious to you, as you are to me—but as *your husband*, you will perform the part of *a wife*, and all this in cold obedience to the commands of the church. Therefore, I repeat it again—as a wife, you are odious to me.”

“Henry,” said Bertha, “the words you speak are terrible to hear; for they are not those of a christian. Remember the place where we are, and remember in whose presence we stand.”

As Bertha spoke these words, she pointed to the tabernacle, and Henry bent his knee, even though he had but the mo-

ment before avowed that he was nothing better than a rank voluptuary.

“I cannot, I know,” said Bertha, “command your love, although I have done my utmost to win it: I cannot master your affection, although I have endeavored to deserve it. Time may do something for me—adversity, and yet, I pray you may be preserved from it, may do more. Remember that I am your wife: remember that if, as you say, duty alone influences me, that I will fulfil that duty, should sickness come upon you, or sorrow overtake you—that there is one faithful, devoted, and if you will permit it, fond heart that you may fly to, and there find peace and consolation.”

“If piety were beauty,” observed Henry, “and devotion an attraction, I have always admitted that you would be one of the most fascinating women that ever existed. But you have reminded me that this is not a fitting place for a husband and wife to quarrel. I like prayers in church, and I do

not object to them in the mouth of a bishop, priest or monk ; but in the banqueting-room I prefer to prayers rich viands and costly wine : in the battle I like to see brave feats performed, to hear the clashing of swords and the shivering of spears ; and in the festival hall I like to see the merry dance, to be greeted by none but brilliant eyes, and pearly teeth, and smiling mouths ; but with you, I have naught that I like. You can pray for me, and I do not desire your prayers ; and if you smile upon me, I know that it is but as a mask to what you conceive to be a religious exercise. Bertha, we are not suited to each other. You ought to have been a nun—anything but what you are—the nominal wife of Henry. I have acknowledged you as my wife, I have desired that you should be received and treated as my queen ; but sooner than consent to go through any longer the mummery which I was obliged to-day to enact in this

very place, I will this moment quit Frankfort: for know it is my determination, though I accord to you both the naines of queen and wife, that I intend to live as if there was no queen, and as if I had no wife.

“What ho! guards without there!” cried Henry, raising his voice, “is Count Werenher returned?”

“I am here,” answered Werenher. “The forty knights ordered by Your Majesty are all armed, and ready to start this moment.”

“Have you also steady and nimble steeds for yourself and me?” inquired Henry.

“All is done as you desired,” replied Werenher.

“Come then with all speed to Goslar. Farewell, Bertha—remember the last words I said to you.”

“I shall remember them with tears,” replied Bertha, “and forget them, should the

day ever come, when you may be sorry that you had spoken them. Farewell, Henry—may the blessings, and the forgiveness of a wife go along with you!"

## CHAPTER X

## THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE CARDINAL.

“BROTHER of Mayence,” said Peter Damian when he and Sigefrid were alone, “I have already stated that the special mission on which I was so hastily sent to Frankfort has been fulfilled ; but still I cannot depart from Germany without communing with you, upon the deplorable state to which our holy religion is described as being reduced by the ambition and the avarice of churchmen. Brother, if that which is stated to

His Holiness be true, he bids me warn you that you are but a slothful shepherd, for either seeing the crimes of your brethren you wink at them, or by your tepidity neglect them.

“I need not tell one of your learning what the crime of Simony is—that it consists in placing, as it were, that which is a temporal advantage in the same balance with that which is wholly a divine thing; that it regards the one as an equivalent for the other; that it bestows the one to obtain the other, as if wealth were a compensation for a spiritual gift. To do this you must declare, with me, to be a profanation.”

“Assuredly,” said Sigefrid, “no one can accuse me of simony—no one can ever say of me, that I have received money for bestowing any offices in the Church.”

“No,” replied Peter Damian, “no such charge is preferred against you. No one has accused you of a direct participation in such a sin; but this is obvious—this is

notorious to the world—this cannot be denied by you—that you hold one of the highest offices in the Church of Germany ; and yet, I ask you, what is the state of that church over which you may be said to preside ? Has not Meginward, the good Abbot of Rickhow, voluntarily resigned his office because of the spoliations committed by his own knights, as well as in consequence of the devastations perpetrated by the King on the monastic property—divesting the monastery of those lands which the pious generosity of former Abbots had bestowed upon it—stripping it so completely of its wealth, that there has been left scarcely sufficient to afford the poorest subsistence to the monks. You possess great influence with the King. I ask you how you have employed it ? Have you tendered the slightest remonstrance to His Majesty, who has thus robbed the Church to reward his military followers ? And then I ask you—who has been appointed as the successor of Meginward ? Is it not

the Abbot of Bamberg—the notorious ‘Robert the Rich?’ And how did he obtain that appointment? was it not by paying into the King’s treasury a thousand pounds in pure silver? Again I ask you, if this same ‘Robert the Rich’ has not rendered himself infamous by his usurious practices, and by his investing capital in various occupations with which a monk should have naught to do—and finally, if he has not disgraced himself by a title, ‘*the rich*,’ that is most properly applied to him on account of his enormous wealth—he having made a vow of poverty! Oh, brother, brother, I ask you, if you, dwelling here, have not heard that which has been related at Rome, of this same Robert? namely, that it is by his wealth he calculates upon obtaining high office in the church—that he watches for the sickness of rich bishops and abbots—that he longs for their deaths—that to secure his interest with the favourites of the King, he is always making them costly presents, and

that he lately offered the Sovereign, if His Majesty would expel its present occupant, and bestow upon him the abbacy of Fulda, a hundred pounds weight of gold ? Have you, I ask you, treated that man as he merited ? Have you protested against his appointment as Abbot ? Have you refused to invest him with ring and crozier ? Alas ! no. Holding the position you do in the church, you have been silent—you have forgotten that it was your duty to protect the sanctuary from pollution, and the poor from spoliation. You have only thought of not displeasing the King, and you have been forgetful that you, as a Prelate, are a guardian of the people. But the people have done that which you were afraid to do. Abandoned by churchmen, they protected themselves ; for the moment that they heard that ' Robert the Rich ' had been appointed Abbot of Rickhow, they met together with arms in their hands, and they declared that they would sooner die than permit themselves to be bought and

sold as so many slaves. And they have succeeded in their opposition ; for Robert feared to add the crime of murder to that of simony, and the people thus have saved themselves from the degradation and the misery of being ruled over by 'a hireling.' That, which they have effected for themselves, you should have accomplished for them ; and thus the church might have been preserved from a great scandal.

"You have not done so ; for I fear that elevated as you are by birth, by rank, by riches, so far above the general mass of mankind, your sympathies are solely with men of your own class, who are the gainers by this sin of simony. It is kings and nobles alone that have an interest in its perpetuation ; whereas, if your sympathies were with those for whom Our Saviour sympathized — 'the poor' — you would know, and feel, and you would act upon that knowledge and feeling, namely that the greatest sufferers by 'simony' are the church and the poor — the church that is

scandalized by it, and the poor who are spoliated in consequence of it ; for simoniacal princes, prelates and abbots apply to their own benefit, and the enrichment of themselves and their families, those lands, those revenues, and that wealth which were solely given for the subsistence of those who serve at the altar, as well as the subsistence, clothing, feeding, and tending in sickness, of the poor, the helpless, the destitute, the traveller, the widow and the orphan.

“ Simony, the crime of this age, is the sin of the rich against the poor—it is the robbery of the poor by the rich—of the most poor, by the most rich—of the most humble by the most exalted—of the meanest in rank by the highest—of the slave by the King ! So feels the Pope—so feel the people.

“ The people have demonstrated by deeds their abhorrence of this crime. They did so but lately at Florence, where they rose in insurrection against their bishop, who

had won his way to the mitre by the practise of simony.

“ Listen, brother,” whilst I narrate to you that which occurred at Florence, and where a miracle has testified the abhorrence of this sin by heaven,

“ The bishop was notoriously guilty of simony, and the moment the people of Florence heard of his appointment, the whole city seemed to be invaded by a foreign foe ; for sighs, groans, and lamentations, were to be heard on every side, and even the women, casting their veils from their heads, were to be seen with dishevelled hair running about the streets striking their breasts and exclaiming, ‘ Oh, God ! oh, God ! hast thou abandoned us ? for Simon Magus, and not Simon Peter, is about to take up his abode amongst us ! ’ The men, declared that sooner than submit to be governed by a heretic, they would burn down the city, abandon the place of their birth, and with their wives and children betake them to some other part of the globe. As to the

pious priests and monks they avowed that they would close up the churches, and that thenceforth, neither bells should be heard, nor psalms recited, nor masses said.

“ The bishop and his adherents, (for, like all other rich and great men, he had adherents, followers, friends, and flatterers) denied that he was guilty of simony, and then it was that a monk, who was also a priest, offered to prove by the ordeal of fire, the guilt of the bishop. Those who are full of sin are generally devoid of faith, and so it was in this case, for the bishop and his friends had the hardihood to accept this offer.

“ And now attend to what followed. I can describe it to you in the words of an eye-witness.

“ The moment that the offer for “ a fiery ordeal,” was accepted, two large, long piles of dry wood were constructed by the people. These piles, which were placed so close to each other as to leave but a nar-

row passage, an arm's length between them, were each ten feet long, five feet and a half broad, and four feet high, and the pathway itself was completely covered over with dry wood. Whilst it was constructing, the monk-priest appointed to undergo the ordeal, proceeded to say mass, and when he came to the words, "*Agnus Dei*," four monks, one bearing a crucifix, another holy water, a third a blessed candle, and the fourth a thurible full of incense, advanced to the piles, and began setting them on fire. No sooner were the flames seen to rise from the piles, than the words "*Kyrie eleison!*!" burst from the entire multitude, and our Lord was appealed to, that He might be the defender of His own cause, whilst the intercession of His mother, and of the Apostle St. Peter were prayed for. By this time, the priest had received the Holy Communion, and had finished the Mass. He then divested him of his chasuble, but retaining all his other sacerdotal robes, he advanced with the abbot and his

brother monks to the burning piles. There the prayers ceased, and then one person, appointed for that purpose, proclaimed aloud the conditions on which this ordeal was undertaken. These having been approved of, the Abbot then addressed the multitude in these words :—‘ My dear brethren ! men as well as women, God is our witness, that what we do this day, we do for the safety and salvation of your souls ; and in order, that you may be saved from the sin of simony, which has overspread this filthy world as a leprosy. It is a sin that is contagious, and at the same time, so awful in its effects, that scarcely any other sin may be compared with it.’

“ The piles of wood now burned furiously—the greater portion of both had become flaming brands belching out thick volumes of fire ; and the wood that lay between, and which reached up to the ankles were red with heat, when the monk

and priest placed himself in front of this blazing road, and then in obedience to the Abbot, he delivered himself of this prayer :—

‘Oh, Lord! the true light of men believing in Thee, I seek Thy mercy, and I beseech Thy clemency, that if Peter of Pavia, he who is called Bishop of Florence, has by means of money, that is, by any pecuniary consideration, which is simony, obtained possession of this See—that Thou then, my hope of salvation, wilt save me in this tremendous trial, and that Thou wilt miraculously preserve me, from any hurt or damage, as Thou didst formerly preserve the three young men when cast into a burning furnace. This is my prayer to Thee, who art one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever !’

“ All present answered ‘Amen !’ to this prayer. The monk-priest gave and re-

ceived the kiss of peace with his brethren, and upon being told, that it would be deemed sufficient if he passed once slowly between the burning piles, he then advanced, and, making the sign of the cross, as his defence against the impending danger, and waving the crucifix in his hand before him, he, with a sedate, solemn, but still joyous countenance, boldly and bravely stepped into the midst of the flames ! The flames seemed to cluster around his person, and then to rise over his head, as if clinging to him they gained a greater elevation than they might otherwise have attained. They penetrated his alb, and seemed to swell it out with their furious heat, yet did not injure it—his maniple and his stole were licked by them, yet not consumed ; and even the fringes of his robe were played with by them, tossed about as if they were exposed to violent gusts of air, yet remained unscathed ! The naked feet with which he walked upon the burning wood felt no heat of fire, and the hairs of

his head, although they sparkled with fire, were unsinged. He stood in the midst of those blazing flames unharmed, for there was within him a fire stronger than any that can be composed from earthly materials —it was the vivid, all-consuming fire of faith, and no corporeal fire could injure him, who was animated by it.

“ Thus passed this pious monk, and holy priest unharmed through the fiery ordeal—thus did Heaven show its favour to him who perilled his life to put down simony, and thus did it condemn him, who practised simony!

“ Brother Sigefrid, what I now state to you, I state on the authority of an eye-witness —that of Atto, the Bishop of Pistoia. It is as true, as that I am now speaking to you ; and if true—oh ! consider, dear brother, in what a perilous position you now stand, if, having the power to prevent such an enormity as simony, or to impede its progress, you have refused to act, or declined to interfere,

when miracles from above testify, that wherever the sin is committed Heaven is offended, religion is wronged, and the poor spoliated. Look, I say, to the state of the church in Germany of which you are a Prince and an Archbishop. See the evils which one wicked man alone—Robert the Rich—has been able to effect ; how he has corrupted, dishonoured, and vitiated what was formerly, and might still be, the holy and angelic lives of monks—how, owing to his pestilent example, monks are no longer esteemed in Germany by their great virtues, but by their great wealth ; and that in the choice of Abbots, the enquiry is not ‘Who is the most worthy,’ but ‘Who is the most rich,’ and ‘Who can pay the highest price for the mitre ?’ Is it not—and I blush to be obliged to ask you the question—is it not a matter of public notoriety, that the office of Abbot is set up for sale in the King’s palace, and bestowed upon him, who can pay the most money

for it? I tell you, brother, this is a sin that must be suppressed, and a scandal that must be reformed: and the Pontiff has resolved upon exterminating it utterly out of the bosom of the church, and woe! to those who oppose him!—and woe to you, Sigefrid, Archbishop of Mayence, if you decline to aid, or shrink from co-operating with him.”

“ I thank you, brother, I thank you heartily,” said Sigefrid, deeply moved by the appeal thus made to him. “ I admit that I have been remiss—that I have not had that zeal that should have animated one holding my position, and invested with the great privileges that have been confided to me. In this case, believe me, my sin has been that of omission, and not of commission. But then, brother, look with compassion upon the frailties of another—frailties that in my case arise from a natural timidity of disposition; a timidity that unfits me from denouncing the sins of

the great, and of condemning the crimes of those I am in the habit of associating with.

“That is, in point of fact,” observed Peter Damian, “telling me that you think you could save your soul in a cloister, but that there is every certainty you will lose it, as Archbishop of Mayence.”

“I fear that you give but a proper interpretation to my words,” said Sigefrid.

“Then why continue Archbishop of Mayence; why not choose the life of a monk, where you believe salvation awaits you?” asked Peter Damian.

“Aye—why not!” said the Archbishop, animated for the moment with an ardent zeal. “Why not think of my eternal salvation! Why not prefer it to all the fleeting grandeur, and evanescent greatness of this world!”

“Aye—why not indeed?” whispered Peter Damian.

“Why not,” continued Sigefrid, “why

not leave behind me, the reputation of a saint? Why not be thought of as one who, born to noble rank, and possessed of the greatest office in the Church, next to that of the Pope—yet turned away from a palace with all its luxuries—from a cathedral rich with countless treasures—from trains of knights and a nation of dependent serfs—why not be remembered with reverence by mankind, for abandoning all those things to become a bare-footed, meanly-clad, ill-fed monk! Why not at once do this!"

"Alas!" sighed Peter Damian, as he noticed what were the motives that were influencing Sigefrid to descend to the condition of a monk.

"Why not," exclaimed Sigefrid, still enthusiastically, "why not fly from the vices, and the temptations of this world, and bury oneself far away from them in the quiet and repose of a convent! in some monastery of Italy—some monastery that is not exposed to the burning heats

of summer, nor the chilling frosts of winter, but where there are green trees, and fresh flowing waters, and where the rules are not too rigid for an old man so delicately nurtured as I have been to conform to. Yes, I will go to a monastery ; but not to your monastery of Font-Avellano, brother Peter Damian ; for there I am told the austerities practised, are almost beyond the limits of human endurance."

" Alas, alas !" exclaimed Peter Damian, " you admit yourself to be unfitted for discharging the onerous duties that belong to the Archbishopric of Mayence, and you are, I fear, as much unsuited for a monastery."

" How say you," said Sigefrid, " unsuited for a monastery ! Wherefore ? I pray you, brother ; tell me wherefore, when I declare to you that I, though a Prince and an Archbishop, am this very moment desirous to become a humble monk."

" Permit me to look at your crosier," said Peter Damian.

Sigefrid placed his crosier in the hands of the poor Cardinal Legate. It was a wonderful piece of workmanship ; one of those rich articles in which the costliness of the materials is surpassed by the skill of those who have devoted a life time to its embellishment ; in which diamonds, rubies, amethysts and amber, are converted into portions of subjects illustrative of the designs of the artists that use them. Valuable from the intrinsic worth of the jewellery and gold encrusted upon it, it was of priceless value as a complete artistic gem, that from one end to the other pictured forth the life and death of the first Archbishop of Mayence—the saint and martyr Boniface.

Peter Damian appeared to examine it with great interest and curiosity, and as he did so, a glow of pleasure warmed the breast of Sigefrid.

“ I remember to have read,” said Peter Damian, “ I think it was in the works of St. Gregory of Tours, of a foolish practice that prevailed in his day, of young per-

sons, who being desirous of manifesting their attachment and regard for one another, did so by sending as gifts the shoes that they wore. A worthless present, but still esteemed, because demonstrative of a sincere feeling. If you love me, and respect me, I would wish you to make me some such donation."

"Willingly, dear brother," cried Sigefrid, "name what you please, and I will bestow it on you."

"When the holy Abbot, Saint Benedict," continued Peter Damian, "desired to show his love and esteem for any particular person or religious, he sent him, as a gift, his crozier, or pastoral-staff. Do you the same. Give me this crozier."

"That crozier!" cried Sigefrid, turning pale at such a proposition. "Truly, brother, you have so given up your thoughts to spiritual things, that you do not know the value that attaches to temporal goods. That crozier is the richest and the most

costly that ever yet was formed. Constantine, amid the many treasures he bestowed upon Pope Sylvester, gave him no one thing in itself worth one tithe of that crozier. I had that crozier made for myself—as Archbishop of Mayence ; it is only suitable for an Archbishop of Mayence to bear, for it is devoted solely to the illustration of the glorious labours of our patron, Saint Boniface. I have, from my own means, crowded the Cathedral of Mayence with crosses of gold, with chalices, candelabras, thurifers, all of the purest metal—I have covered its tabernacles with precious stones—I have filled its library with books that are richly illuminated, and still more richly bound—I have deposited in its vestry vestments of matchless splendour—and all this I have done, intending to bequeath each and all those things to my successors in the archbishopric ; but beyond them all, because greater and richer than all, will be esteemed as the grandest heir-loom of each coming

future Archbishop of Mayence, that very crozier. With that intention I had it made ; and for that purpose I had it constructed. Ask me, then, for anything but that crozier, for that I cannot give to you."

" Alas, brother," said Peter Damian, " you have answered me as I expected, and as I feared. Your reply shows me that you are not suited to a monastery, or that if you, in a sudden gush of rash zeal, were to enter within the monastic walls, you would but remain there a very few days, and this because your heart still clings to the dross of this world. I will not say that I put this question to you merely to test your sincerity ; for I candidly tell you, that if you had answered my question, not as I feared, but as I wished, then I would have accepted the crozier from your hands, and knowing its value well—to the golden crown, I dare say as well as you do—yet, once it was mine, I would have tried your patience

sorely, for I would with a common hatchet, and before your own eyes, have taken and broken it to pieces."

"What, broken up this crozier!" cried Sigefrid, clasping it to his heart, "broken up this precious, this invaluable, this exquisite, this matchless piece of art!"

"I would have done so," replied Peter Damian; "for precious as it is, I regard it but as filth, when compared to the value of one immortal soul. I would have broken it up, and having done so, I would have restored the fragments to your hands, that you might sell them, and whatever the proceeds might have been, desired you to bestow them upon the poor, in order that they might pray that your spirit might be freed from an attachment to the vanities of this world. Ah, brother, it is not to do honour to the meek and humble Saint Boniface that you have emblazoned his acts in gold and jewellery upon this crozier —it is to do honour to yourself; for whilst

seeming to venerate his virtues, you have been but a self-idolator—seeking to perpetuate your name, not in Heaven by good deeds done in secret, but amongst men—amongst generations that pass away, and that as they pass are too much absorbed in their own vices, to remember those who have passed before them, and especially those who have fixed their fame in the accumulation of riches. The thief that steals this crozier, will bear away with him the fleeting glory for which Sigefred, the wealthy Archbishop of Mayence lost Heaven!"

"Brother—brother—you astonish me," exclaimed Sigefrid, in amazement. "Can it be, that you, who have passed your life on the steps of the sanctuary—disapprove of what I have done—of bestowing all my wealth upon the enrichment and the adornment of the altars?"

"Alas! you misapprehend me" replied Peter Damian, "because you do not know

yourself. Why is it that the Church approves of the adornment and the enrichment of the altar ? It is because that men should offer up to Him who is the Giver of all things, that which is in their eyes the most rich and the most costly of His gifts : that what might be an incitement to vanity, may thus become an inducement to piety : that God should be most honoured in that place which He has himself selected as His favourite dwelling amongst mortals ; and that whilst our eyes are dazzled by seeing the glory that invests Him here on earth, our thoughts may be elevated to the greater glories that surround him in Heaven, and of which we shall be participators, if, whilst on earth, we endeavour to imitate His example. The lapidaries fancifully ascribe to different stones different qualities, that is, they regard those stones as emblematic of various virtues, and even so a diamond cross, a jewelled tabernacle may become a worthy

subject of meditation, and may incite us to chastity, to temperance, to meekness, to humility, to charity. The adornment of the altar by gifts of great value, is, in itself, a pious act. As such, I approve of it; but in your case, I do not approve of the motive; for it is vanity—it is a craving desire after the praise of men—not a pure desire for the honour and glory of God alone."

"Then," said Sigefrid, somewhat impatiently, "what would you say to me if I devoted that wealth, which I now consecrate to the Church—to the enrichment of my own family, or to the indulgence of my own appetites."

"I would," replied Peter Damian, "declare you to be a flagrant, an abominable, and a sacrilegious sinner—a Judas, who betrayed his trust—I would denounce you to the Pontiff, and I would do my utmost to have you excommunicated—I

would treat you, as I mean to treat Robert the Rich."

"And I would deserve it," despondingly remarked Sigefrid. "It may be, that in what I have been doing, I have been deceiving myself—that in performing what I knew to be right, I have not guarded myself from permitting it to be mixed up with no human, and no selfish motive. I shall endeavour to amend this fault."

"Endeavour too, I beseech you," said Peter Damian. "Endeavour to amend a still greater fault—that of lukewarmness in the cause of religion. Power and authority have been given to you—exercise them, for the future, in the protection of the poor and the weak, and in opposition to the wicked, the powerful, and the great. Dare not, if you would not incur the penalties of eternal damnation, to lay your hands in consecration upon the head of any man, of whose purity, in every respect, and of whose

fitness for the priesthood you have not first by a searching and diligent enquiry, been thoroughly assured. Stop thus at the fountain-head, those corrupting waters that have overspread, and almost submerged religion in so many parts of Germany. Do this, and though your name may be forgotten by mankind, as that of the rich Archbishop of Mayence, yet be assured that the good you thus do, will be remembered when this world is annihilated—and those only shall be living, whose virtues have saved them from eternal death."

"Yes—yes—this I will do, at least. I promise to do this," said Sigefrid, whose zeal was again fired by the words of Peter Damian. "And then as to becoming a monk—"

"Promise only what you can perform," remarked Damian. "You can refuse consecration to all unworthy postulants. You would not permit a leper to sit at the same table

with yourself. Do not allow a notorious leper to become a *truchsess* or carver at the table of the Lord ; for if you do, *you* will be responsible for the poison that he will distribute to the laity, in place of the manna with which they should be nourished.

“ As a christian—as a priest—as an archbishop, I promise, dear brother, to fulfil your injunctions in this respect,” said Sigefrid.

“ Let no threat of man induce you to break this promise,” exclaimed Peter Damian.

“ It shall not,” answered Sigefrid.

“ Let no temptation move you to swerve from it,” added Peter Damian. “ Be your answer that of the Prince of the Apostles, ‘ Keep thy money to thyself to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.’ ”

“ This too I promise to say,” replied Sigefrid.

A bare-footed monk here entered the apartment, and said, in addressing himself to the Cardinal :

“A pilgrim, who states that he is from Italy, presses earnestly for an interview with you, and alone.”

“I shall leave you,” said Sigefrid, breathing somewhat more freely upon perceiving that there was a chance of this interview being brought to a close.

“I will not detain you longer, brother,” answered Peter Damian. “I am much consoled by the promise you have given me. Bear it ever in mind ; for the words that we have spoken in secret, have been heard by Him, before Whom you and I shall yet stand as criminals. Remember, that there is not a word that either of us has here spoken, that will not be recalled back to us, as we gave utterance to it, as well as *the intention* with which each syllable had been pronounced. God grant that the inquiry may tend to the salva-

tion of both! And now, brother, let us part with the kiss of peace—never, I feel confident, to meet again as living men in this world—and certain to be confronted with each other in the world to come."

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE FORTRESS OF ERZEGBIRGE.

MORE than three weeks had now passed away, and Beatrice found herself still a prisoner in the hands of Diedrich, confined by him in the seemingly inaccessible fortress of Erzegebirge. During all that period, sorrow, sickness, and horror had confined her to her couch ; and it was with reluctance that she assented to the prayer of Gretchen, and ascended to the battlements of the tower in which she was

confined, for the purpose of inhaling the fresh air. She looked out upon a wide, and extensive mountainous scenery, in which, were everywhere visible, the labours of the husbandman, and the rich rewards that Heaven bestows upon man, in cultivating the earth. Drovers of cattle were discernible in one place—herds of swine in another, and around them were fields that promised, in their due season, an abundant harvest ; whilst close to the foot of the high, steep, rocky hill, on which the fortress had been erected, but yet separated and self-protected by a wide trench, and a strong stone wall, was a hamlet, or rather village, with some hundreds of inhabitants, and having, in the centre of that, which appeared to be their widest street, a large church. The village, as seen from the fortress, seemed to be rather a pictured than a real domicile of human beings, for though persons were discernible in it, engaged in their different avocations, still they were removed to such

a distance, that no sound that came from them reached the ears of the spectator, and the stillness of the air was as unbroken as if the fortress had been planted in a wilderness.

Beatrice, upon mounting to the battlements, gazed, without a feeling of the slightest interest, upon the scene that presented itself to her view until her eye rested upon this village. She looked long, and attentively towards it—seemed to be amused, as if she were a child, in watching the movements of the silent little figures beneath her—she rested against the battlements, and clasping a small broken fragment of one of the huge parapets in her tiny hand, she exclaimed :

“I would, Gretchen, that I could be transformed into this puny pebble, and that thou couldst fling me from this battlement into the midst of that peaceful hamlet.”

“And wherefore,” said Gretchen, smil-

ing, “wish for two things that are alike impossible ?”

“ Because, I believe, that it is only amongst the poor that true peace, and real virtue are to be found,” answered Bertha. “ Oh ! I am sick—sick to death of this life, and if it were the will of God, would gladly give up existence this very moment. I have, whilst lying on my bed of suffering, reviewed in thought, the few years I have passed in this world, and what have I seen ! a mother, the very model of perfection, yet a martyr to some unknown and undiscoverable grief—a father, for whom it would be hard to say, whether I love or fear him ; whether I do not fear him too much to love him, or rather, I know not why, I fear to love him—a childhood passed in riches, in pomp, and in mystery : and then the last month of my existence, where, in addition to my own sufferings, my underserved sufferings, caused by the caprice of a wicked monarch, I have

looked upon virtue, united first to an imperial, and then to a regal crown, and yet, because of its exalted rank, doomed to years of ceaseless weeping, and of hopeless grief: and then, last of all—worst of all—the death of the Bishop—”

“I pray of you not to permit your mind to rest upon that scene,” interrupted Gretchen. “Think of Duke Magnus—think of your destined husband.”

“Words—vain—unmeaning words,” continued Beatrice. “I cannot think of Magnus but with love—the love I ever have felt for him, as a child—the love I ever shall feel for him as a woman, but as my husband—my destined husband, I have ceased to think of him since I witnessed the martyrdom of the bishop.”

“I do not understand you,” said Gretchen. “What had the cruel, and bloody murder of the venerable bishop to do with the pure love and devoted affections of Duke Magnus?”

“Much—much—very much,” answered

Beatrice. "I have been too weak, and too ill since that dreadful day to speak of it; but circumstances occurred, of which you are, until this moment, unconscious. It is not necessary for me to bid you remember the speechless agony in which Gertraud left us, when she bid us pray to God for mercy on the soul of one, who was then living, and who had never given cause of offence to man. Oh! God! who can paint our agony, when we heard the voices overhead, upon the accursed precipice, and when a long yelling shriek was followed by our finding that the body of the bishop had rolled down to our very feet. You insisted, after a brief examination, that the bishop was still living, despite of his desperate fall, and ran to seek for water. It was during your absence, the occurrence, which I am now about to narrate took place.

"I was kneeling, weeping, and my hot tears were falling upon the face of the dead, as I supposed, when the mangled

bishop heaved a sigh, and suddenly opened his eyes, and gazed on me, and seemed to gather slowly the meaning of the words I uttered, and they were prayers for him. A gentle smile—such a smile as beams around the lips of martyrs, lighted up his features for a moment, as he said :—

“ ‘ I give thee thanks, oh! God, who thus permittest thy unworthy servant to pass into thy presence, aided with the prayers of a holy maiden !

“ ‘ My child,’ he continued, ‘ my words must be few ; for I feel that life is momentarily leaving me. I bear about with me the Blessed Sacrament. It must be saved from the hand of infidels. Take it,’ he said, unloosening a small locket of gold, enriched with precious stones, and that hung from his neck by a thin golden chain. ‘ Take it, my child, I permit you to conceal it in your bosom : there let it rest in that locket until you have the opportunity of giving it in safety to a priest. In thus re-

quiring you to take charge of it—and which nothing but the circumstances in which I am placed would justify, for I know my garments will be searched when dead, and that it would fall into the hands of my murderers, the unbelieving Paterini—I ask of you, whose person will thus become consecrated by such a charge, to devote yourself, if it be possible, to the service of that Spouse, of whom you now have the sacred care. None but virginal hands should ever approach it, and the hands that have once come in contact with it, should remain for ever after employed in the service of the Lord.

“‘ Such is the last prayer—such the sole request of one, who though a sinner, God has been pleased to make a martyr of. To him be praise and glory, for ever and ——’ As he spoke these words, his voice was interrupted by a gush of blood; I felt that the warm glow was on my face, on my hands, on my neck! Talk then,

Gretchen, to me no more of Magnus, as my husband. I am consecrated to God in the blood of a martyr. I remember no more ; for I fainted as I felt the blood of the Bishop upon me."

" Alas !" I know it but too well," said Gretchen, " for I despaired of your life for many days afterwards. But tell me, lady ; do I understand you right, when you say that you bear that awful locket still upon you ?"

" I do," replied Beatrice. " I bear it about me with fear and trembling. "Here it is."

So saying, she undid the robe that covered her neck and throat, and Gretchen beheld, resting on the snow-white skin, a dazzling locket. The moment she saw it, she went down upon her knees, and fixing her eyes upon it, gave utterance to a pious prayer. Beatrice remained moveless as Gretchen prayed, and when she saw her making the sign of the cross, she fastened up her dress again, and said :

“I scarcely need tell you, Gretchen, that I have been very careful that my hands should not touch that locket. I have removed it solely by the chain that is attached to it, and I long for the moment when I can deposit it with a priest. The sight of the church in yonder hamlet reminded me of it, and made me wish that I could fly down there and disburden myself of this awful—this most sacred charge. Alas! here, where kingly power has erected one of its strongest fortresses, there is neither truth, virtue, nor honour to be found.”

“Say not so, pretty maiden,” said Gertraud, here stepping up on the battlements. “Say not so of the stout fortress of Erzegebirge, as long as you, and I, and Diedrich make of it our abode; for I am truth, you are virtue, and Diedrich is honor. I never told a lie, therefore I am truth; you do not as yet know what it is to be vicious, and therefore you are virtue; whilst as to honest Diedrich, who would

as soon think of injuring the King, or any one he had sworn fealty to, as the mastiff would of biting the hand that fed him, he is honour, from the crest on his helmet to the spur on his heel."

"And yet," remarked Gretchen, "this man of honour murdered a good and unoffending bishop."

"If your mistress," said Gertraud, "desired you, upon the peril of disobedience to cut off her golden hairs, would you not do it, even though you disapproved of the act itself?"

"Most certainly I would," answered Gretchen, "and I may add, that even though censured by others for what I had done, yet would I hold myself not only excused but justified because it was in pursuance of an order which I had no right to disobey."

"Then what a silly girl you are," said Gertraud, laughing, "to censure acts which you do not comprehend? Think you that my brave Diedrich does not know, as well as

you do the duties of a tiring woman, the duties of a knight to his king, of a soldier to his officer, of a vassal to his lord. It was not he, who murdered the Bishop of Osnabrück—it was King Henry—Diedrich only executed orders he was bound to obey. It is not the sword that kills, but the hand that compels it to thrust, and slash. Diedrich had sworn to obey the King's commands: it would be dishonourable in him to violate his oath; and the more disagreeable to himself the order that may be given, the more honourable in him literally to fulfill it. Your mistress may pride herself in her virtue, as I boast of my sincerity; but of this I am quite certain there is more real, pure honour in the heart of Diedrich, than there is of virtue in her, or truth in me. Why should you dislike Diedrich? Has he not acted most honourably towards you both? He was desired to treat you with every respect, and to render your lives as happy as was consistent with your complete security? Well—knowing that

you hate the sight of him—that you have an abhorrence of him—since he slew the Bishop, has he not most honourably refrained from appearing before your mistress?"

"Aye! but not appearing before us," remarked Gretchen, "this honourable man employed you as a spy to watch over us when we were travelling thither."

"Certainly," said Gertraud, perfectly unabashed. "In so doing, he only acted upon the desire that no accident should occur to prevent his honourable fulfilment of the order given to him—to keep you in safe custody—so that no attempt at escape should be made by you. With that intention, and not caring to know one word that you may say, that does not bear upon any such project, he appointed me as a spy upon you, when you were travelling; and now that you are able to walk about, he has again re-appointed me to act as a spy upon you two. It was with that intention I came here—and it is with that inten-

tion I mean to watch every word you say, and every thing you do. I am acting as a spy this very moment ; and if you knew a little more of the stratagems of war you would perceive I was so conducting myself without my telling you."

" As you are so candid, and so very truthful," remarked Gretchen, " I would wish to know why you have not approached us for three weeks, and wherefore it is, that you now place yourself by our side as a spy ? We are now, as we were then, prisoners—We are the same to-day, that we were this day three weeks."

" You are not the same to-day that you were this day three weeks," replied Gertraud. " No one is. I more than doubt if any one is the same person to-day, that he was yesterday. We are always in a constant state of change, though we see it not ; the infant falls into the grave an old man, and yet he has changed from day to day, and thought that each night he slept produced no change in him ! Ye are three

weeks older than you were three weeks ago : the world too is three weeks older since then : and this I know, that many a brave man, who this day three weeks went to bed in his peaceful home, now reposes for ever in his blood-stained grave : many a woman who this day three weeks had no other anxiety on her mind than whether the kine had been cared for, or the swine returned safe from the forest, or that her children had been well nursed, is now husbandless, childless, homeless ; for our valiant King Henry has been wasting the lands of the Saxons. No sooner did he break up his Parliament in Frankfort, which had declared Otho Duke of Bavaria a traitor—”

“ What ! the uncle of Magnus declared a traitor ! ” said Beatrice, shocked at the intelligence that thus unexpectedly reached her.

“ He has been declared a traitor,” continued Gertraud. “ His treason consisted in his great wealth and his high office, and

Henry wanted the one for himself, and the other for a friend—and as Otho would not yield them for the asking, Henry determined upon taking them—and, therefore, he had Otho declared a traitor. He is an astute man our King Henry; for the moment that he had Otho denounced as in a state of war against himself, he had also ready provided and prepared the means of rendering Otho incapable of resisting him. The doom of the Frankfort Parliament was instantly followed by swarms of soldiers pouring in on all sides on the principality of Otho. The orders given to these soldiers were to lay everything waste with fire and sword, and those words they have literally fulfilled. They have torn, or they have burned down houses and growing crops—carried off the cattle, or destroyed what they could not carry off; and all the cultivators of the fields, wherever they have met with them, they have mutilated so as to render them incapable of toil for the future, or they have cut off their hands,

or hung them upon trees. Even the churches have been broken into, their altars spoliated, and then the edifices themselves set on fire. The Castle of Hanenstein, which attempted to resist the King's soldiers, has been captured and all the defenders, because they dared to oppose themselves to the King, put to the sword. Otho's great fortress of Tesenberg, which was deemed to be impregnable, has, by the cowardice of its soldiers, yielded without striking a blow, and it is now garrisoned by the King's Schaaren. In addition to this, the lands, the houses, the churches, and the gorgeous villas and estates of Duke Otho's wife, have been all set on fire, and the women and boys found in them massacred—and this in revenge for the flight of the men, who, to save their lives, fled to the shelter of the marshes and the dark recesses of the forests; and who, in doing so, supposed that no soldier would injure innocent wo-

men and unoffending children. And no real soldier would, I am sure, do so, unless he had positive orders to kill screeching women and yelping boys. I will answer for it, stout Diedrich would sooner eat a piece of his sword, then sheathe it in the heart of a woman or a puling boy—but *if ordered to do so*, that is another thing. You know a soldier must obey orders. It is a very unpleasant duty ; but it is sometimes necessary, as in this instance, where it was deemed requisite to force an entire people into a state of rebellion. For such an object nothing is ever more successful than the massacre of women and children. King Henry is too well versed in statesmanship not to know *that*, and accordingly, he gave his orders, and his soldiers obeyed, and now his desires have been accomplished. All Saxony is in open rebellion. We slaughter the Saxons when we like, and they kill us when *they* can. If you remain upon these walls but an hour

longer, you will witness as fine a piece of military skill as any soldier would wish to witness.

"I trust you do not mean to tell us," said Beatrice, "that I shall be again doomed to behold any more of the barbarities of the terrible man who unjustly retains me here as a captive."

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed Gertraud, "my brave Diedrich—a terrible man! What, the brave Diedrich terrible! I can assure you, young lady, that Diedrich is as mild as a lamb—meek and gentle as a dove, when he has the wine-cup in his hand. He never did a cruel thing in his life for the sake of inflicting pain on another. He is a soldier—it is his profession to kill—it is his duty to destroy the King's enemies, and he only puts them to death as the butcher kills cattle—for the general benefit of the community! Even now, he does not bear the slightest malice to any individual in that hamlet you see below, and yet, before the sun sets, he has con-

trived a project, which, if carried into full effect, will result in not leaving alive a man in that hamlet who is able to bear arms. Oh ! Diedrich is a most able general —a true soldier—and, as I have told you before, unequalled in an ambuscade."

"Oh, Heavens !" said Beatrice ; " how can these poor people have offended Diedrich ?"

"They have done him grievous wrong, lady," answered Gertraud. "Two of the soldiers under his command descended into the hamlet a few days ago : they did so without permission. It is not improbable that they misconducted themselves there—that is, that they wished to take away something that did not belong to them, or perhaps kissed some Saxon maiden, or wife ; for our soldiers, when they do drink, are very apt to be rude, and to fancy they have a right, especially in time of war, to whatever they set their eyes upon. However, what may have been the cause we know not, but the people were offended, and

instead of arresting those soldiers, and bringing them before Diedrich, who would have punished them if they deserved it, the rustics thought fit to avenge their own wrong, set upon the soldiers, murdered them, and hung their bodies on trees outside their wall. There they have been discovered ; and Diedrich has resolved upon punishing their murderers. Villains no doubt they were—but they were his soldiers—slain whilst under his command, not in battle, but by the hands of citizens, and he is resolved to have a life for every hair of their heads. Oh, he is a good general, and he loves his soldiers as if they were his own children. Wait now here but a short time longer, and you will see a fine device of war."

" When, oh, when shall these horrors cease!" cried Beatrice.

" Horrors!" cried Gertraud, amazed at an expression that was new to her, and as applied to a profession she so much admired. " Horrors, forsooth! why, what

are the materials of which fame and glory are composed, but those very things that you, lady, designate as horrors. What was Alexander the Great ? What was Cæsar ? What was Charlemagne himself but a Diedrich with a crown on his head. Take away from these, all the blood that they shed—all the widows they made, and all the orphans they have left desolate—all the homesteads they have wasted and the crops they have destroyed, and where is their glory ? Let us fancy they had never done any one of these things, and then we should never have known them. I dare to say that my own brave Diedrich has, with his own hand in fair, open fight, and with his good sword, put to death more than any one of them in all his life personally encountered. Their fame then does not consist in their mere personal prowess alone—their fame consists in the accumulation of ‘horrors,’ which they had the power of inflicting during their life time upon their fellow-creatures. You weep over the fate of a

single hamlet, and yet you have been taught to marvel at the achievements of an Alexander and a Cæsar, and to reverence a Charlemagne. *I admire them*—and I do so, because I love Diedrich; and when I am told what victories they won, and what battles they gained, I believe that I am a sharer in both, because I know they never could have been accomplished, if those famous heroes had not hundreds of men like Diedrich under their command. But I pray your pardon, lady, I was about to tell you of the success of Henry's policy in ordering the massacre of women and children on the estates of the wife of Duke Otho. It is a subject in which I know you must feel interested, as it will compel me to tell you something of the young Duke Magnus."

"Oh, proceed—proceed," said Beatrice; "for you mention a name which my poor, trembling heart tells me, binds me still too strongly and too closely to this world."

"No sooner then," continued Gertraud, "had Otho received intelligence of the

barbarities thus committed by the king's soldiers, than he grasped his sword, summoned his knights, and vassals around him, and made an incursion into Thuringia; and such mischief, as had been inflicted upon himself, he did to the king; pouncing down upon all the farms and villas of the enemy, burning and wasting, and carrying off spoil wherever he went, and thus impoverishing the Sovereign as he himself had been impoverished. He swept away, in his victorious career, every opponent, until he at length came to Henschenwege, where Count Rutger at the head of a large army was drawn up to encounter, and, it was hoped, to annihilate him. There Otho was joined by the Duke Magnus at the head of a large body of horsemen. This battle took place but a few days ago, if that can be called a battle, in which from the first moment that Duke Magnus with his horsemen dashed down upon the soldiers, the caitiff, Count Rutger, the compurgator of Egen, and the cause of Duke Otho's

being declared a traitor, gave, by his own base cowardice, the signal for flight to our men. Before an arrow could reach him, Rutger ran from the field, and the battle, in a single moment afterwards, became a carnage, in which the fugitives, as they fled, were cut down by their victorious pursuers. The king, we are told, lost hundreds of men ; Duke Otho but two—and now whilst the Saxons are collecting all their forces for the purpose of attacking Henry, he is concentrating a grand army around Goslar ; he has proclaimed an arrier-ban in all parts of the Empire, and Swabians, Bohemians, Bavarians, and even the Italians, are hastening to his aid. Yes—we are sure to have a great and decisive battle very speedily. I trust that my valiant Diedrich instead of being left here, in the inglorious occupation of watching two poor girls, will be recalled by the king, and that I, with him, may be permitted to see a grand engagement between the whole of

the Saxons, nobles and people, (for all are in full insurrection,) and the other nations of the Empire. The Saxons are brave, and are sure to fight well. Meanwhile, our spies tell us that Duke Magnus has been detached from the camp of Otho towards the Borders of Bohemia. It is suspected, that he is coming here with the intention of rescuing you."

"Of rescuing me!" exclaimed Beatrice. "Oh! Heavens, why endanger his life, for one so worthless as I am?"

"Why?" cried Gertraud, her dark eyes flashing with indignation, "because he would himself be most worthless if he did not do so. He is betrothed to you—he is bound to protect you, and if he shrunk from fulfilling such a duty, he would be unworthy of the shield of a knight, the sword of a soldier, or the name of a man. It is calculated that he is as brave as he is young, and therefore am I here acting as a spy upon you, so that you may have no

communication with him, the knowledge of which shall not be instantly forwarded to Diedrich."

As Gertraud spoke these words, a twang and then a whizzing noise was heard as if an arrow had been shot from a bow drawn by a strong hand. The practised eye of Gertraud shewed her that the arrow must have been shot from a clump of trees that lay at the base of the fortress from the side opposite to that on which the hamlet lay. She then watched the rapid flight of the arrow ; she observed that it mounted high in the air, and then turning, was coming point downwards in a direct line on the very tower on which she and the other maidens stood. She instantly removed the helmet from her head, and watching the descent of the arrow, thus intercepted it before it could reach the ground.

"A good Bowman!" exclaimed Gertraud. "He measured the distance well ; but in this instance he has not hit what he aimed at."

As she said this, she detached from the arrow a piece of parchment, and as she read the lines inscribed on it, there was a flush of joy in her face.

“I will thank you, lady,” said Gertraud, “to permit me to look at your veil for a moment.”

Beatrice handed the snow-white veil to Gertraud, who, instead of looking at it, stepped, as she was, bareheaded, forth upon the battlements, and then waving the veil three times in the air, above her head, again retired behind a parapet, so as not to be visible to any one looking from beneath up at the tower.

“What means all this?” asked Beatrice.

“I will tell you the signification of it presently,” answered Gertraud, “But whilst waiting for the explanation, I pray you to look out beyond the hamlet, and see if you can discern there anything that is strange.”

“Oh! yes!” exclaimed Peatrice—“I behold there—far away—I suppose it is

two miles distance that houses have been set on fire—and see! there is a dark smoke rising up from some of the fields, as if there were a smouldering fire amongst the crops! Who can be the perpetrators of such gross and wanton mischief?"

"Our own brave soldiers—do you mark them there, with blazing torches in their hands," said Gertraud. "See—there is not more than twenty of them. Observe, how they keep in a close, dark body together; and as they gather round the huts of the husbandmen, and the cottages of the shepherds, a flame bursts forth, and the fields over which they pass fume up. Oh! they know their profession well. Diedrich chose them as the most accomplished devastators in the fortress."

"And this is war! *glorious* war!" cried Beatrice, shuddering.

"This war! I pity you, girl, for your ignorance," said Gertraud, smiling. "This is but one of the preliminaries to, or the consequence of war. This is simply mischief,

not war: and here it is intended as a provocation to war. And oh! rare, oh! most excellent! as such it is accepted in this instance. Ah! what an admirable captain is my brave Diedrich. Look now into the hamlet—mark the running to and fro of men, and of women. See how the latter clap their hands in grief, and how the men arm themselves as best they can—and now—see—the gate is thrown open, and they go tumbling out in crowds, with swords, and spears, and shields, and arrows, and scythes, and whatever else they can think of—poor fellows! they little know what awaits them, or they would not be in such a hurry."

"What!" cried Gretchen, "would you expect them to remain calm lookers on at the wanton destruction of their property by some twenty miscreants, and not annihilate such villains? In less than half an hour I hope to see them return with the heads of those wretches."

"Excellent! most excellent!" replied

Gertraud ; “ that is brave Diedrich’s calculation as to what the people of the hamlet would say. His plot now, I perceive, is certain of success. See, the men are all pouring out still—there must be three hundred of them at the least— shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, butchers. Ha ! what is this ? They have left a few to watch the gate. That is the most sensible thing they have done as yet. There is then a chance that the hamlet will not be destroyed. But mark now, Gretchen, what I say to you. There is not one man in ten from the hamlet that crosses the small stream you see below there, that looks from this like a thin thread of silver, no, not even one man in twenty who fords it now will ever return living to the hamlet ; and only they have had the precaution to set a guard upon the gate—not one man —nay, not even a woman or child in that hamlet, would live to see to-morrow’s sunrise. See, the villagers are scatter-

ing themselves in all directions over the fields, lest, by any chance, the small troop of horsemen should escape them. Mark! how those horsemen seem to be unconscious of all this commotion, and still keep burning homesteads and crops ! Oh ! these are true veteran warriors ! These are the men that make kings famous in story.”

It was with a breathless attention, but with far different feelings, that these women now looked from the battlements of the castle upon the scene below. Beatrice regarded what was passing with horror, and with fear even for the lives of those few soldiers who were perpetrating such wanton mischief. Gretchen, with all the intense feelings of nationality burning in her heart, and all her sympathies absorbed in the fate of her countrymen, and in the welfare of her nation, looked down eagerly, thirsting for the blood of every one of those oppressors that she saw thus laying waste

the land, and destroying the property of unoffending husbandmen—of *Saxons* too, and therefore loved by her as her brothers. In her desire for vengeance upon them she did not heed the words of Gertraud, and only wished that she were a man, and out in the fields with the inhabitants of the village in pursuit of the spoilers. Gertraud gazed upon the same scene calmly, unmoved, unshaken—but still interested—as if she were but looking on soldiers practising a mimic engagement, and not occupied in a real action—She regarded with the eye of a connoisseur what was passing, and prepared to bestow praise or blame, with equal impartiality, on which ever side she saw courage displayed, or cowardice exhibited.

Thus watched these three women for some time, and such attention did they bestow upon the movements of the villagers on the one side, and of the few soldiers on the other, that not a word was spoken. At last, they perceived the soldiers, who had

been engaged in the work of devastation, pause, at the very moment that they appeared to be on the point of being surrounded by the villagers, and then to start off at quick gallop, with all the men of the village in pursuit.

“The cowards!” exclaimed Gretchen. “It is as I expected they would never venture to cross sword with the Saxon.”

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when there was seen to emerge from a small wood that lay on the other side of the streamlet, a band of about one hundred horsemen, who instantly darted off in pursuit of the villagers.

“Excellent!” cried Gertraud. “That is the device managed by my gallant Diedrich—See now—how the horsemen charge down on the villagers. There—they have come up with them, and now begins the work of blood. The villagers seek to hold fast together; but they never can stand against the weight of men, and horse and point of spear—No—down they go, as the

ripe corn falls before the sickle of the reaper. See, now they are broken. They are slashed down with the sword—they are transfix'd by the lance. They fight well too ; but they fall fighting. See—where they stood together, there are but mangled heaps of corpses, and now they run—they have thrown down their shields to enable them to fly the quicker ; but the horses are after them, and on them wherever they go. See now they lie on all sides—some run for safety to the wood, where the horsemen hide themselves—and look it is now, as I told you—not one in twenty will ever live to cross that streamlet—Oh ! brave Diedrich—victory ! victory !”

“ Demon ! or woman ! which ever you are !” cried the infuriated Gretchen, “ cease your babbling, and if you have a spark of feeling in your heart help me to bear the Lady Beatrice to her chamber. Look !—she has fainted. You might have perceived it long since, if you did not delight so much in the sight of inhuman butchery.”

“ Alack !” answered Gertraud, with as little sympathy for the cause of Beatrice’s fainting as the veteran sailor feels for the landsman when enduring the agony of seasickness. “ Alack ! I forgot the delicate young lady had never before seen men battling with each other—life against life. It is a fine thing, however, although tender-reared women don’t like to look at it. Come, Gretchen—I will not merely help you ; but I will relieve you of the burden altogether. I will carry her myself unaided by you.”

So speaking the muscular Gertraud raised Beatrice in her arms, and bore her from the ramparts to her chamber, and there, placing the still senseless form on a couch, she turned to Gretchen, and said,

“ Girl, as you care for your own life and that of your mistress, let neither of you venture, during the coming night, to stir a step outside this chamber. Mind—that you are to remain here no matter what noises you may hear, or however boisterous may

be the clamour around you. In saying this to you, I only express the wish of Magnus."

"And how know you," asked Gretchen, "the wishes of Magnus?"

"They are written here," replied Gertraud, showing the small piece of parchment, which she had detached from the arrow that had lighted on the tower whilst they were conversing together. "His words are few, but very intelligible. I shall read them for you, as it is probable you are not as well educated as if you had fled from a convent-school to a camp. They are these:—

"This night an attempt will be made to rescue you. Do not stir from your chamber. Wave your veil to show that this has reached the tower.

"M."

"Oh! woman, woman!" cried the indignant Gretchen; "and it was for the

purpose of betraying Magnus, that you asked for the veil of Beatrice."

"By no means," replied the unshaken Gertraud. "I only waved the veil to show that his missive had reached the tower. As to the attempt at rescue, the waving of the veil had nothing to do with it. That attempt will be made, though your mistress never wore a veil. When it is made, Magnus entreats that she may remain in her chamber. Very well—let her do so. She now knows the wishes of Magnus, and may comply with them."

"But why, if treachery be not intended, not tell her at once the purport of the message sent by Magnus?" asked Gretchen.

"Because," replied Gertraud, "she is such a poor, weak, nervous, timid girl, that I doubt if even you, who know his wishes, will communicate them to her—because I think, that you will deem it to be more prudent to induce her to remain quiet, without telling her the reason for so

doing, until the danger is over, than by explaining the cause, add to her apprehensions, and uselessly excite her fears. These were the reasons for my silence, I marvel if they will not induce you to be silent also."

"Circumstances must guide my conduct," said Gretchen. "Leave me the missive, in order that, if I should deem it prudent, I may shew it to the Lady Beatrice."

"I cannot do that," answered Gertraud, "for I have to shew these lines to Diedrich."

"To Diedrich ! oh, Heavens ! then we are destroyed. You mean to betray us to Diedrich," cried Gretchen.

"Betray you ! nonsense !" answered Gertraud. "What confidence have you reposed in me, that I am about to betray ? I told you fairly that I was a spy upon you ; and the object with which I joined you. I have now attained that object. I have discovered that Magnus intends to rescue Beatrice this night. He does right

in making such an attempt. It is the duty of Diedrich to render that attempt abortive, and it is my duty, as the spy of Diedrich to give him such information, as may enable him to fulfill the task he undertook, when the care of Beatrice was confided to him. I am but performing my duty. Do you yours, by taking better care of your mistress, and not leaving her so long unintended, and she in a fainting fit."

"Oh! this is terrible, most terrible!" cried Gretchen, wringing her hands in agony. "The Duke Magnus will be slain, and we have not the means of warning him of his danger."

"There is no use in those tears," said Gertraud. "No man can die more be-seemingly than with a sword in his hand, and facing an enemy. I have seen Magnus—I like him, and in communicating this intelligence to Diedrich, I intend to beg of him, as he loves me, not to kill Magnus—*if he possibly can avoid doing so.*

Let that thought console you. It is all I can say to you or do for you. And now," said Gertraud, as she quitted the chamber, "I go with all speed to Diedrich, the bravest soldier and the best captain in the army of King Henry."

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE NIGHT ATTACK.

Two persons sat side by side at a table in a richly furnished apartment in the fortress of Erzegebirge. Before them were large flasks and golden goblets filled with wine, which ever and anon were raised to their lips. One of these was Diedrich ; the other Gertraud. He seemed to be lost in thought, and Gertraud, absorbed in the contemplation of his hideous features. Both were silent, for he had not as yet,

acknowledged her presence since she had entered the room ; but by nodding his head, and pointing to a seat and the wine-cup, which she was aware—from long habit—were to be construed into an intimation, that it was his pleasure she should sit beside him, and drink with him.

The silence was, at length, broken by Diedrich, who having, at one draught, swallowed down a pint of wine, said, without looking at her :

“ Any news ?”

Gertraud replied to the question not in words, but by placing in his hand the missive from Magnus, which she had intercepted.

Diedrich read it over word for word deliberately—so deliberately, that he took as long a time in spelling through each word, as a modern reader would in running his eye over a page of a book. Having thus read it over—he held it in his hand—filled out another large goblet of

wine—tossed it down his throat—then paused for a few minutes. Again unfolded the piece of parchment—and, having again re-perused it, he tossed it back in the direction in which Gertraud was sitting, and gave utterance to the single word—

“Good!”

He then drew forth his dagger, and began drawing lines with it on the table—marking carefully by indentations on the knob of the hilt—the spaces between the different lines—he rested his two elbows on the table, and placing his head between his hands, and fixing his eyes on those lines, he commenced studying them with as much attention as if there had been proposed to him, for the first time, the solution of a difficult problem in Euclid. Had he thought of Gertraud—had he looked up at her, whilst he was thus occupied, even he could not but be surprised to perceive, with what reverential admiration her eyes were fixed upon him.

His thoughts, however, were not for her—they were all taken up with his calculations ; and, until he had concluded them, he never again raised his eyes from the table. At length, his hand stretched out mechanically to the wine-cup, and without looking at it, he placed it to his lips. It was empty.

“ Bad !” growled Diedrich, at the disappointment; and his eye fell angrily on Gertraud.

“ I feared to disturb you, by moving,’ said Gertraud, “ otherwise I should have poured out wine for you.”

Diedrich made no answer, but held out the goblet, and Gertraud filled it with wine. He drank off the wine, and then looked up at her, as if wishing to know if she had any thing to say to him.

“ May I now speak to you ?” asked Gertraud.

Diedrich nodded his head.

“ I suppose that Magnus hopes to take

the castle by surprise, when he says, that he will rescue Beatrice to-night."

Diedrich again nodded.

" You have now been devising the means, whereby not only his attack will be defeated, but the assailants destroyed."

Diedrich's nod again intimated his assent.

" Have you taken into your calculation that the hamlet, which this day's doings rendered hostile to you, will serve as a sure place of retreat to Magnus and his friends when defeated by you ?"

Diedrich's assenting nod followed those words.

" Very well, then," said Gertraud, " I consider their defeat now as certain as if I saw them already beaten back from the walls ; but, in the coming engagement, there is one favour I have to ask of you, which I hope you will grant me, especially, as I can shew you that it is for your interest not to refuse it—that doing as I suggest, will

win you the respect and gratitude of the King."

Diedrich stared in amazement at Gertraud, but said nothing.

"Magnus comes here as a soldier, to attack you, a soldier. Betrothed to Beatrice, he wishes to rescue her from the grasp of the King. He bears no animosity to you—he merely seeks to take from you that which is *his*, but the safe custody of which has been entrusted to you by another, and which you therefore are bound to guard. Respect Magnus, then, as discharging his duty. If you meet him in combat, try to make him your prisoner: do not, I beseech you, unless it be to save your own life, take his. Spare Magnus—"

"Spare Magnus!" exclaimed Diedrich, in utter astonishment, and departing from his usual taciturnity at the strange proposition made to him, that he should show any mercy to a member of a family whom he knew Henry was anxious to destroy.

"Yes—I repeat it—spare Magnus; for

Magnus, once killed, his corpse is as worthless as that of the poorest, meanest and most contemptible wretch slain this day by your soldiers ; but Magnus living—a prisoner in your hands—is a captive-duke, whose person may be valued at the price of a principality, and whose liberty cannot be bought but with a countless treasure. Make him captive—place him a prisoner in the hands of the king, and you bestow upon your sovereign the means of exacting submission even from Otho, the uncle of Magnus, who is now at the head of the Saxon rebels.”

“Humph !” grunted Diedrich, as he rose from the table, and grasped a huge battle-axe in his hand.

“And now,” said Gertraud, “tell me what you desire me to do when the fortress is attacked. Where shall I station myself?”

“With the other women,” answered Diedrich. “Go to bed.”

And uttering these words, he quitted the room.

“Even in the midst of his cares as a captain,” said Gertraud, looking with wonder and admiration upon Diedrich, “he can be jocose! What a wag! Go to bed—to *listen* to the clashing of sword and shield! No—Diedrich—that is an order which you gave to me *as a woman*. But I have also to perform my part *as a soldier*; and amongst other things I have to do is—to watch that no harm may befall you.”

She hastened, as she spoke, in the direction towards which she had seen Diedrich proceeding.

The missive, that Gertraud had so unfortunately intercepted, told the truth.

No sooner had Magnus ascertained that the place destined for the detention of Beatrice was the fortress of Erzegebirge, than he returned to his uncle, the Duke of Bavaria, for the purpose of procuring an armed force, sufficient by its numbers, to

secure the conquest of any fortress, no matter how strongly it might be defended by nature, or by the bravery of its garrison. The hopes of Magnus in this respect were doomed to disappointment ; for the the proceedings of the King in having Otho declared a traitor, and next in invading his lands, compelled both the uncle and nephew to engage in a defensive war, which was at last crowned with success by the decisive victory of Henschene-wege. The first use that Otho and Magnus made of that victory was to send a detachment, commanded by the latter, to Erzegebirge, and it was the anxiety of Magnus to save Beatrice from any personal danger in the attempt to storm the fortress, that induced him to warn her in the manner already described, of the contemplated attack. From the manner in which his message was responded to, he calculated that no one was apprised of the dangerous enterprise in which he risked his life, but Beatrice and her attendant.

He had just reason for supposing that such was the case ; for although the fortress was watched on all sides by his spies, as long as there was the light of day to assist them in their observations, there was no stir and no movement upon the battlements to indicate that any additional preparations were making for defence, or that any suspicion was entertained by the commander, Diedrich, that there was a large body of his foes collected in his immediate neighbourhood.

Bernhard, who had proved his skill as a Bowman, in sending the arrow to the tower on which he had seen Beatrice, assured Magnus that the scarf, which, a moment before, was worn by Beatrice, had been waved in return, not by her, but by a dark-haired woman, and, therefore, there could be no doubt but the message had been read, when it was so promptly and punctually responded to. Magnus, who did not know the appearance of Gretchen,

concluded that “the dark-haired woman” was the attendant upon Beatrice, and therefore had no fears for the safety of his beloved. It was then, with feelings of impatience, he saw the hours of the day pass so slowly away, and as darkness fell upon the earth, he mustered the men under his command—in all, three thousand Saxons, who were to act as the assailing party ; whilst he retained, as a reserve, on the level ground, five hundred horse, who were ordered, in case he was killed, and the infantry driven back, to come to their rescue ; and then having saved them, to make good their retreat to the hamlet.

Having thus made his arrangements, as a general, Magnus resolved, for the remainder of the night, to perform the part of the soldier, and to be, if it were possible, the very first to climb the wall of the garrison, and to gain possession of so important a stronghold for his countrymen.

The time fixed by Magnus for the commencement of the attack, was the hour of midnight. At the same moment, and in pursuance of his directions, the three thousand Saxons commenced climbing up the precipitous and rocky sides of the steep hill, on which the fortress was erected. Silently, but slowly, they crept up step by step, holding fast to each projecting point by their right hands, whilst, in their left, they carried the arms with which they meant to assail the garrison. Amid this little army of climbing men there was but one thought—that they might have the opportunity of attacking, and taking desperate vengeance upon those, who had that day slaughtered their countrymen. As they mounted, they rejoiced to perceive that there was perfect stillness in the place they were on the point of assailing. All, at length, reached the top of the hill, and stood fronting the wall of the fortress, from which they were

only separated by a narrow fosse, which surrounded the castle on all sides.

Magnus here placed them in line, and had given them directions to make a charge, with the words, “God and the Saxon land,” when there shot suddenly forth from all the battlements, javelins with blazing lights attached to them, and which, at the same time, struck down several men, and served to shew to the defenders the numbers and precise positions occupied by the assailants. A few groans had been uttered by the wounded, when there came pouring down upon the heads of the Saxons, enormous stones, discharged by machines of war, and flights of spears, whilst the whole wall itself seemed to open ; the rugged surface being, as it were, split with innumerable *arballisteria* for the cross-bowmen, and *archeria* for the archers ; and then came, darting direct at the faces, or at the bodies of the Saxons, the *ballota*, or leaden bullets,

the thick arrows from cross-bows, with javelins, and small stones, and thin darts, which left a deadly wound in every man they touched. No helmet, no hauberk, and no shield, availed here, for such was the strength and force with which all things, discharged by the balearic machines, were sent, that they not merely wounded, but they crushed down to the earth a mangled mass the person upon whom they fell, or they bore him and all, to the rearmost rank, from their position, and sent them tumbling down the precipice behind them, deprived of life, long before their bodies could reach the level earth.

At one moment was seen the sky lighted up by burning darts, and then followed, as it were, a shower of stones, arrows, and other missiles, rattling heavily against shields, helmets, and cuirasses ; and then shrieks of agony, and of horror ; and, in a moment afterwards, the platform was, with one or two exceptions, cleared of the men

who had so recently stood there, full of life, and courage, but who were now swept away, despite of themselves, by this outburst of destruction, which they could no more resist than the weak and fragile dam, erected to restrain the summer stream, can withstand the rush of water that the rains of winter have swelled into an impetuous and overflowing river.

Of all the Saxons, thus whirled down the precipitous steeps, they had but a few moments before ascended, two alone stood in safety fronting the wall. These were Magnus and Bernhard.

“Well!” said Bernhard, “it is plain, that your missive must have fallen into wrong hands.”

“Alas!” exclaimed Magnus, “for my brave Saxons! Do you, Bernhard, escape if you can—as to me, I will stay here to be shot down. My men are slain, I will not outlive them.”

Scarcely had he uttered these words when he found Diedrich, Gertraud, and a

hundred men from the garrison before him. His words were interrupted by the loud voice of Diedrich giving the command.

“Down the hill after them. Slay all you overtake. Shew no mercy. Make no prisoners.”

“Ah!” said Magnus, “Thank Heaven, I shall not die unavenged. Come, Bernhard, let us both strike at once at this merciless villain—do you aim at his heart—I will strike at his head.”

As Magnus spoke these words, Diedrich perceived him and his companion. Diedrich’s soldiers, in pursuance of his command, had left him; and he now stood alone with the camp-follower, Gertraud, by his side.

“He, with the helmet of burnished gold is Magnus,” said Gertraud.

Diedrich had not time to answer her, when the rush upon him was made by Magnus and Bernhard. He surmised the

intention of both, and at the same instant, parried the blow of Magnus with his sword, and received the thrust of Bernhard on his shield. The blow of the latter was replied to by Gertraud, who striking Bernhard heavily with her sword on the helmet, sent him reeling back a couple of yards from Diedrich.

Diedrich perceived that the blow of Gertraud, had disembarrassed him of a second assailant. Instead, however, of striking at Magnus, he dropped the point of his sword to the ground and said—

“A moment’s truce—you are, I believe, Duke Magnus.”

“I am,” answered the youth.

“Then yield yourself a prisoner. I promise to spare your life.”

“Never,” said Magnus, “shall I be in your power!”

With these words Magnus again raised his sword, and waiting until Diedrich had crossed blade with blade, he said—

“Now—butcher of King Henry, defend yourself. I want your life, take mine if you can.”

“*Boy!*” exclaimed Diedrich. “You are my prisoner,” and as he pronounced the word, “boy,” he ran his sword with the rapidity of lightning, and with such tremendous force down upon the hilt of Magnus’s sword, that it crushed the muscles of his opponent’s hand, and sent the sword itself from his grasp with a shivering thrill of agony, so that Magnus felt the iron gripe of Diedrich was upon his left hand, and in an instant afterwards, that his arms were tied behind him.

“You are now, my prisoner,” said Diedrich. “I spare your life, because I believe the King wishes me to do so. Say that you yield, and I will at once unbind you; for I do not desire to dishonor one of your rank with these gyves.”

“I yield,” said Magnus. “I cannot avoid doing so; and though I would prefer death to captivity, still I submit with

patience to that hard trial, which God has ordained I should submit to."

"Good!" said Diedrich, at once unbinding his prisoner, and looking round to see what had become of Gertraud and her opponent.

Meanwhile, Gertraud having, by a single blow, driven back Bernhard, she, for the purpose of leaving Diedrich free to carry on his conflict with Magnus, followed Bernhard, intending, if she possibly could, to despatch him. With this object, she again rushed upon him, and aimed a second blow at his head—it was met by the shield of Bernhard, who, at the same instant, came with his own sword upon the helmet of Gertraud with such force, that the blow felled her to the earth, and her helmet tumbling off, her dark, curling hair fell in clusters over her now pale face, as she lay stretched upon the earth, and arrested the attention of Bernhard, at the very moment, that he had raised his sword for the purpose of striking a deadly blow.

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed—“this is a woman! Poor creature! I suppose she is attached to this monster Diedrich. I respect her fidelity, as I would that of the dog, that fights for its master.”

And with this compliment to the female warrior, the honest Bernhard sheathed his sword, stooped down, and began chafing the hands and forehead of Gertraud, in the hope of restoring animation.

Gertraud opened her eyes whilst Bernhard was thus employed. His attitude and his look shewed to her the compassionate feelings that animated him, and she, on the instant, resolved, if she could, to save his life, who had spared hers.

“You are,” she said, “an honest, true-hearted, brave fellow. Here, take this helmet of mine—it is the same as that worn by our soldiers, and may serve to save you from their swords; for they are now as a hundred to one against you. Down,”

she continued, “down by this bye-path. If you are challenged—the pass-word ‘*Gertraud*,’ will procure you a free passage. The life of Magnus is safe, as long as he is the prisoner of Diedrich. Hasten you to the camp of Otho, and tell him what has befallen your leader and companions. Hasten—hasten away. If Diedrich sees you living, I cannot save you from his rage.”

As she said these words, she removed the helmet of Bernhard, and replaced it with her own. Bernhard looked around. He saw Magnus, with his arms tied behind him, and Diedrich, with a drawn sword standing before his captive. This sight at once convinced him, that the only course for him to pursue was that suggested by Gertraud.

“Farewell,” he said, as he disappeared down the precipitous path pointed out to him. “Farewell—I hope we may meet again soon.”

“Then if we do,” answered Gertraud

“I trust it may be in the field of battle, where I may return to you the heavy blow, which makes my head still ring with pain.”

“Be it so,” said Bernhard, “so that we do meet: but be you what you may, I shall ever feel that you have done your utmost to save my life, and my sword shall never again be lifted against you. Farewell.”

“Farewell!” cried Gertraud; and as she spoke the word, her eyes filled with tears—the first tears that had bedewed them for many a year.

Gertraud’s broad, brown hand was raised to her face. She dashed away, with a feeling akin to indignation, those symptoms of womanly weakness, and murmured with a softened voice:—

“Tears!—I have never shed tears since I was at school in the convent—since I was a girl—since I was innocent—since I first hardened my heart against all I once was taught, and once believed; and can it be, that I am now changing? no—no—no

—change—impossible ! it is the wicked knock on the head which the hand of that honest fellow has given me, that makes me cry. But if I were, what I once was, and still ought to be, what a good husband that strong-handed Saxon might be ! Alas !”

“ Ho ! Gertraud,” exclaimed Diedrich, perceiving when he had unbound Magnus, that his camp-follower was alone ; “ what has become of the Saxon.”

“ He is *gone down* the precipice after the rest of his companions,” answered Gertraud.

“ What ! is it possible,” said Magnus, “ that the sturdy Bernhard could have been slain by a woman ?”

“ He knocked off my helmet,” answered Gertraud, “ you may perceive that I now wear his. I intend to preserve it as a trophy.”

“ Do you mean to say, that you have actually slain my follower ?” asked Magnus.

“I mean to assert,” answered Gertraud, “he might, but for me, be now living on this platform of rock ; whether he will reach the bottom of the precipice living or dead, you may guess.”

“Oh ! miserable night !” cried Magnus, “then I am the dishonored survivor of three thousand valiant Saxons !”

“Brave Gertraud,” said Diedrich.

“Never lament the fortune of war,” said Gertraud, as she approached to Magnus, and whispered in his ear—“Bernhard has escaped—I aided him—be silent.”

“As your prisoner,” said Magnus to Diedrich, “I am ready to be conducted to any cell you may appoint.”

“Follow,” said Diedrich, as he led the way within the postern of the fortress.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE KING AND DUKE MAGNUS.

THE course of policy which Henry had marked out for himself to pursue, with respect to the Saxons, had been crowned with complete success. He had calculated that his demands for tithes to himself, as well as tithes to be paid to the Archbishop of Mayence, being alike an impoverishment of the Saxon church, and a diminution of the means of sustaining religion, its ministers, its churches, and the Saxon

poor, who looked to the monasteries for relief and subsistence, would, as a matter of course, excite discontent in the minds of the prelates, priests, monks and people of Saxony. He insisted upon having tithes upon every thing to be found in the field, the farm-yard, the pasture-ground, the garden and the orchard ; and as in Saxony there were to be seen whole districts or tithings, consisting of none but free peasants ; of those who were unprotected by any vassalage to lay-lords, or to churchmen, the exactions of the King rendered them in their poverty, more destitute, whilst they were compelled to feel that they were dishonored, by a patient submission to such demands. If they manifested the slightest unwillingness to comply with the requisitions of the King's officers, they were instantly visited by detachments from the various fortresses Henry had erected in Saxony : the young men were dragged away as if they were slaves, and compelled to work in strength-

ening the walls of the fortresses—the houses were burned down, the cattle were carried off, and the female peasantry were subjected to outrages worse than death itself.

Henry had calculated that the Saxons would be thus forced into open insurrection against his supreme authority, and he had also calculated that the sympathies of the Saxon nobility and prelacy, as well as their interests, would be arrayed against him. In both calculations events proved that he was correct. Not content with oppressing them by his acts, he also sought to provoke them by his words, declaring them to be “a nation of slaves, and only fitted to be treated as slaves,” and “that when Saxons did not learn to conduct themselves like their ancestors, who were slaves, the suitable, and the sole treatment for them was to punish them as traitors.”

It was thus with a species of demon-like joy, Henry heard that men of every age, and of every rank in Saxony had been pro-

voked to take up arms against him, and that they had solemnly vowed to perish in the field, or to win back from his reluctant hands that liberty, which he had outraged, and which was theirs by right of birth. He heard without dismay, that not less than forty thousand men capable of bearing arms had solemnly bound themselves by oath to meet him in battle, and that amongst their recognised leaders were Otho, the late Duke of Bavaria; the Marquess Uto; the Count Dedi; (and more implacable still than any man, marquis, count, or soldier,) Adela—the wife of Dedi; Egbert, the Marquess of the Thuringians (though still a youth,); Frederick, the Count Palatine; the Counts Adalbert, Otho, Conrad, and Henry; and with these Wezel the Archbishop of Magdeburg; Bucco, the Bishop of Halberstadt; Hezel, bishop of Hildesheim; Werenher, bishop of Merseburg; Eilbert, bishop of Minden; Immet, bishop of Paderborn; Benno, bishop of Meissen—in short all the bishops of Saxony, but

three. These, as friends and supporters of Henry, had to fly to his Court for protection from the popular indignation excited against them.

The prowess of Magnus, the victory of Henscheneuge, and the formidable nature of the Saxon insurrection, although apparently, events adverse to the interests of Henry, were, however, those most desired by him; because they justified him in summoning to his standard the entire strength of the German Empire. All were called upon—bishops as well as nobles, with the fighting men under their command, or in their pay, to join the King at Goslar. So rigidly was this requisition enforced, that Anno, the aged Archbishop of Cologne, was, with some difficulty, permitted to be absent from the encampment of Henry, whilst, in the endeavour to discharge the duty thus required from him, the unfortunate Abbot of Fulda met with his death.

“ So overcome by fatigue,” says an ancient chronicler, “ was the Abbot of

Fulda, (who though lame, and in a very bad state of health, was yet forced to attend with his military retainers) ; so overpowered was he by the heat of the day, and by the noise of the multitudinous muster of the King's soldiers, and by the dust, which the trampling on the earth, excited, that he was nearly killed on the ground—in sooth, he only lived to be carried to an adjoining monastery, where he died—and never was able to speak a word more from the time he had been taken so suddenly ill."

That then which Henry desired he had now obtained. He had resolved upon reducing the whole of the Saxon people to a state of serfdom, or of extirpating them *as a race*; and he now saw within his grasp the military means of effecting either object. Never—no—not even in the time of Charlemagne had there been mustered together such an army, as now acknowledged him as their superior lord. There were before him and around him—bishops,

dukes, counts, ecclesiastics, with all their “knights” well armed, equipped, and provisioned for a campaign; and even those prelates that age or sickness excused from giving their personal attendance were forced to send their military contingents to the very last man. The names of some of the nations gathered beneath the standard of Henry for conflict with the Saxons at this time are to be found set forth in the verses of an anonymous poet, who has also bestowed his praises upon some of their commanders.

“Rudolph,” says this anonymous, and obscure poet, “ever valiant in battle, led the ranks of the Swabians, men who were distinguished at all times by their undeviating loyalty and cordial devotion to their sovereign—the descendants of the very men who had first won fame for themselves, and glory for their king, by their triumphs in the Saxon wars waged by the mighty monarch Charles. These were the men led by Rudolph—these had their

country sent forth in thousands from the banks of the gentle streaming Saone, and the rapid gurgling Rhine. To these succeeded the Duke Guelph of the ancient race of the Romans, and like to them by bravery in war, and gentleness in peace, whilst his standard was followed by the illustrious nation of the Bavarians—illustrious for their unshaken fidelity, for their valour, and for their many victories in many battles over the Bohemians.

“Next to the Bavarians, marched the men of Worms—men great in the conflict—an ancient race—and long known by the richness of the territory from which they sprung, and by their gallantry in war. It is their proud privilege to guard the King’s standard in every battle—to be with it in every engagement, and to protect it in every danger. And now, as they had ever done before, they were seen marching line beyond line, and encircling by their swords the gorgeous, shining, and dazzling ensigns of Henry.

“ Immediately following the men of Worms, when the army was on its march, was to be seen King Henry himself. He rode on a proud, prancing, strong, high, warhorse, and as he did so, overtopped by a head, the many thousands of the brave, stout men, under his command, whilst armour of burnished gold added fresh beauties to his noble person and finely-shaped limbs. He shone out as conspicuously amongst the associated chiefs and warriors, as the bright and brilliant Lucifer shines amongst the minor stars in the firmament.

“ Next to the King, the most illustrious of the commanders on this occasion, was the Duke Godfrey—like to his father in valour, but unlike to him in figure—for Godfrey was hump-backed—but yet, though so deformed, a most accomplished warrior,—for never yet, did he bring his soldiers of Tiel and Namur in sight of his foemen, but he was sure to gain a victory that was won from them in blood.

“Along with them also came the ardent and impetuous soldiers of Poland, as well as Frisians and Bohemians—they came, thousands after thousands, and all decorated with dazzling armour—they came with alacrity upon the summons of the King, who now advanced as an avenger against the Saxons as his enemies. And as this mighty and this numerous army marched in the open plains—the earth shook, and the air was filled with the deafening tramp of the horny hoofs of multitudinous steeds.”

So writes a poet of this expedition of Henry, whilst a chronicler, the monk, Lambert, affirms—

“That such an immense army did the leader of the Bohemians bring to the aid of Henry, that they alone seemed sufficient to put an end to the war in Saxony.”

It was whilst passing in review the army thus described, that Lieman approached Henry, and said—

“ I have, disguised as a mendicant, visited the encampment of the Saxons ; and this, I can assure your majesty, is the precise condition in which they stand. They have pitched their tents a considerable distance from the Unstrutt. The whole of Saxony may be truly said to be in insurrection. The bishops and nobles sent out to all parts quick-riding horsemen, armed with drawn swords, by whose means every fighting man has been summoned to the field to defend himself—his family—his property, and his country ; and that call has been universally obeyed. The husbandmen have broken up their agricultural instruments and converted them into weapons—swords have been hammered out—the crooked sickles have been shaped into spear-heads, light shields are now fitted upon their left arms—some have made for themselves helmets of iron, like to those borne by our knights—some have constructed for themselves a species of hauberk from a triple folded doublet. Many thousands of them

have constructed from oak poles a species of spear, by tipping them at both ends with iron and lead. The fields are forsaken by their former cultivators—the flocks abandoned by their shepherds, and the houses by their male inhabitants. There is but one cry to be heard in all Saxony—it is the same in the mouth of the peasant, the priest, and the noble, namely, ‘that it is better to die as freemen, than to live and submit to the base yoke of slavery.’ On every side is to be heard the clash of arms, and the clangour of trumpets, and in every place are to be seen those, who hitherto have lived in peace, practising the arts of war—some being drilled to march as soldiers, and others practising with staves, under the eyes of their teachers, how they are to strike, and how to parry the blows of their opponents as swordsmen. Hearing that your Majesty was marching against them, they have advanced with alacrity to encounter you. They await your attack. They have pitched their

tents, for the purpose of reposing themselves ; and now they intend to send to you an embassy, to see if any terms of peace can be mutually agreed upon between you and them, and should that offer be, as they expect it will, rejected, then they are resolved upon meeting you in the field of battle.”

Henry listened to the report thus made to him by Lieman, and, as he did so, there was the frown of scorn upon his brow, and of contempt upon his lips.

“I thank you, Lieman,” he said, “for your zeal and diligence. It is confirmatory of all the accounts I had previously been told of these Saxon slaves, and audacious rebels. It is news that I am glad to hear, for it assures me of a speedy and a certain victory. Look on the army that I now command—it is mainly composed of choice veterans, of men who have passed their lives in tents, and have seen many battles, and that have been picked out by their various leaders for conspicu-

ous bravery, displayed by them on several occasions. Why, if the Saxons could clothe themselves from head to foot in iron, and had swords of adamant, they could not resist such a force as I now command: but being as they are, what must be the inevitable result, when an army of valiant and practised soldiers comes in contact with a rude mob, a multitude that is only skilled in the labours of the farm, and untaught in the toils of war—a rabble that the arrant fear of their superior lords, and not a desire for combat has driven together. Assuredly, their ill-arranged lines will never await our onset—they will break before we can encounter them hand to hand—the noise, the clash of armour, the pawing of the horses, the bristling spears, and the glittering swords of our cavalry, as they charge down upon them, will alone suffice to disperse them, before a sword can strike, a lance wound, or an arrow reach them. Yes, Lieman, the defeat and the destruction of the

Saxons are alike inevitable. I long to see them before me, and I will, if it be possible, prevent the princes and nobles who accompany me, from hearing that the Saxons desire to treat for peace—”

“ I pray your Majesty’s pardon,” said Lieman, interrupting the King in his observations, “ but here comes, I fear, that which you most dread to see—an embassy from the Saxons.”

“ What mean you ?” exclaimed Henry ; “ that small detachment of soldiers at a distance ?”

“ The same,” answered Lieman.

“ No—no,” replied Henry. “ These are not Saxons. They are some of my own Frankish warriors. I can recognise them even at this distance by their freshly painted shields, which, in accordance with my commands, have been emblazoned with incidents emblematic of the former victories won by Franks from the Saxons. Of a verity, I cannot be mistaken in that, no more than in the figure of their com-

mander. It is my true and trusty Diedrich. I marvel what can have brought him here. Erzegebirge must be safe, or he would not be alive."

"He has a prisoner in his charge," said Lieman. "It must be some one of high rank ; for though deprived of his sword, the young man, rides unbound, by the side of Diedrich."

"I am impatient to speak with him," remarked Henry, "for the honest Diedrich is sure to tell me a fact in every word he utters."

A few minutes afterwards, Diedrich was seen dismounting, with his noble prisoner, in front of Henry, and both knelt in presence of the King, whilst Diedrich said—

"Duke Magnus, taken prisoner by me in an attack on Erzegebirge."

"Rise, Diedrich—and you also, Duke Magnus," observed Henry. "Accept, Diedrich, of this golden-hilted and diamond-gemmed sword. It is the price I pay you

for sparing the life of one, on which I place such value now—*that he is my prisoner!*” There was a malignant smile on the face of Henry as he uttered these words, and then continued—“I suppose my noble prisoner, although young in years, and little practised in the affairs of this life, is aware of all the penalties that attach to the crime of treason. I imagine, that when he determined upon drawing his sword against his sovereign, he was prepared not merely to encounter death—the worst that can befall the valiant warrior—but that he was liable to encounter dishonour—the deep dishonour that is alone reserved for traitors. I presume that he has heard that princes, that dukes, that nobles, have, before now, been condemned by their justly-offended sovereigns to walk from the church doors where the last rites were bestowed upon them, to the place of execution—the borders of the district in which they have been condemned—that they have been doomed to do this barefooted, as if they were beggars, and at

the same time to carry a dog in their arms, thereby to intimate to the world that they were, when living, only fit to associate with dogs, and dying, to be hung as dogs, and when dead, to have their carcases rotting with dogs. I presume the brave, young, prudent Duke Magnus calculated that such might be his fate, if he should ever stand a prisoner before his rightful sovereign."

The face of Magnus flushed with indignation when he heard himself threatened with that punishment—"carrying a dog,"—the most infamous that at that period could be imposed upon a man of noble birth.

"I calculated," replied Magnus, "if I should ever stand in your presence as a prisoner, that I should find in you neither the dignity of a monarch, the generosity of a knight, nor the compassion of a man. So well assured was I that there was not in your heart one particle of that tenderness or sympathy which a truly brave man feels

for the misfortunes of another, that death—death in its most dire form—would have been far more welcome to me than the agony of this moment, in which I find myself a prisoner—helpless, swordless, shieldless, companionless, in the midst of an enemy's encampment, and yet taunted by its commander and its king, because the chances of war have made me *his* captive. Oh, it is base—very base—so base that I tell you, Henry, I would not for all your titles, your mighty dominions, and your boundless power, exchange positions with you at this moment. Better, I tell you, to be Duke Magnus, whose honour is free from stain, and whose reputation is unimpeached, than Henry of Germany, whose name is seldom pronounced but with curses, and who is such a braggart that he triumphs in the captivity of an inexperienced youth, as if with his own sword he had dispersed an army of his enemies. Yes—I am your prisoner; but remember this, that not the wealth of the Byzantine Emperor would in-

duce me to exchange conditions with you, even for an hour. Better—a thousand times better to be as I am now—thus forlorn, thus reproached by you—Magnus the prisoner, than Henry the King."

"Boy! prater! traitor!" said Henry scornfully riding up to his prisoner—breasting him with his strong war-horse, and as he did so, half unsheathing his dagger.

Magnus stood firmly in the position in which he had first been placed, and when he observed the King grasping his dagger, he threw back his own arms, and clutching his hands firmly behind him, he left his breast fully exposed to Henry. Thus he stood, as if defying the King, and not condescending to defend himself, whilst he again addressed Henry :

"Boy! prater! traitor! So you have called me, King Henry. Boy, I may be, though Diedrich can tell you I have conducted myself in no unbeseeming manner as a soldier; boy, I have been, but my

boyhood has not been like yours; for it has been unstained by dishonor, and it has not been tarnished by a single tear from a mother's eye. Prater I am, for the tongue is the only weapon which the captive prisoner is free to use against an ungenerous, a cruel, and un-knightly captor. Traitor, I never have been, for the subject never can be a traitor, when the King becomes a tyrant—in such a case the traitor is the Sovereign who forswears himself, and who uses the powers that the nation has confided to him for the protection of the weak, and the safeguard of justice, to oppress the defenceless, to violate the sanctuary of home, to despoil the Church, and to rob the poor. He who does these things is a traitor—the worst of traitors, for he is alike a traitor to his God, and to the people. Such a traitor—even whilst your dagger is at my throat, I say you are, King Henry. Slay me for telling you so—the slaughter of an unarmed prisoner by your own hand,

can be but a slight addition to the infamy that already attaches to your name."

The bold defiance thus given to Henry by Magnus—the utter recklessness of life so exhibited by the youthful hero produced an effect the very contrary of that which Magnus had calculated upon. Henry perceived that he would but gratify the wishes of Magnus in slaying him with his own hand ; that Magnus would willingly, with his own death, procure for him, dishonor—the great dishonor of being himself the assassin of a prisoner taken in battle. For this dishonor, Henry would have cared but little, if he had inflicted death on one who feared it ; but it was otherwise, when he saw that death was courted by one he detested—to inflict it under such circumstances, would be to do that which his opponent desired, and he was resolved to embitter the sufferings of all who thwarted his wishes, or opposed his designs. Instead then of striking his dagger into the defenceless breast of

Magnus, he sheathed it, and backing his horse a few paces from his noble prisoner, but still fronting him, he addressed him :

“ Had you feared death, Magnus, you would now lie before me a bleeding corpse. I admire your bravery, even though it be exhibited in a bad cause. I will not take your life. Thus it is that as a soldier I show respect for your courage as a soldier. I am not that tyrant which you have been taught to suppose ; and which you never could have fancied me to be if your mind had not been perverted by Duke Otho. As one brave man should esteem another, I feel for you, and I pity you. As your Sovereign, and considering your exalted rank, I cannot, however, wholly pardon you for taking up arms, and seeking the destruction of the paid soldiers of your superior lord. I might punish you as a traitor ; but I will not do so : I could not only take your life, but degrade you, in the manner I have already intimated.”

“Degradation,” said Magnus, “never can be inflicted by the act of another, if it be not the consequence of our own vices. I am innocent of all crime, and therefore I defy you.”

“Listen to me patiently,” said Henry, “or I shall fancy that I have been speaking merely to an intemperate and pert boy, and not to a brave soldier. I will not degrade you; but I cannot forgive you; so far am I from being animated with hostility towards you, that I desire even to bestow upon you your freedom; if you will be but reasonable, and to let you go forth unquestioned from this encampment.”

“And what are the conditions?” asked Magnus, impetuously. “If they include the abandonment of my pretensions to the hand of her whose name is too sacred to be mentioned in so polluted a place as this, I will never agree to them.”

“Love-sick youth!” said Henry, looking down with contempt upon Magnus; “if you and I, and *she*, all stood upon terms

of equality with each other, and that she were free to choose whom she would prefer, I would willingly contend with you for the prize, and be certain I should win from you the victory. As it is, however, I will not condescend to discuss with you a topic, which, for aught you shall know, may be with me an object that engrosses my affections—a passing caprice, or a mere fugitive pastime. I thought not of *her*, when I spoke to you of making you free. You sought her once, and your search has brought you to my feet a prisoner. Should I make you free, you may again seek her, and in so doing, find the dagger of Diedrich in your heart. Thus much I tell you, that you may know that the conditions I propose have nought to do with anything that concerns the amours of your sovereign."

"Oh! rare and excellent King!" exclaimed Magnus, with bitter indignation. "How happy is Germany in having such a sovereign! But speak on—name your conditions. I feel assured that they are,

before you tell them, concocted in the same generous spirit in which you have spoken to me."

"They are conditions much more moderate than you are entitled to," answered Henry. "Remember, you are now my prisoner—that I can retain you in chains for your whole life ; and, be assured, that I shall do so, if you do not agree to my terms."

"Name them," said Magnus, "they must be hard, indeed, if I do not assent to them—when I bear in mind, that once agreed to, I may be not only free, but certain never again to meet you but in the field of battle."

"The conditions," observed Henry, "on which I am willing to set you free, are two—first, that you here, and in the presence of all the nobility and prelates of the Empire, renounce the Dukedom of Saxony which you hold from your father ; and secondly, that you give up to me all the lands and treasures which belong to you

as the sole and rightful heir of your deceased parents."

Magnus looked at the King sternly and silently, and the gaze of the youth only excited a smile on the face of the monarch.

"Your Majesty," said Magnus, at length breaking silence, "names these as the only conditions upon which you will set me free."

"Upon none other," answered Henry.

Magnus stretched forth his hands, firmly clasped together, and scornfully said—

"Then place your manacles, without delay, upon the hands of your prisoner. Better, oh! far better, that *every* limb should wither beneath the weight of the chains imposed upon it, than that my reputation, when living, and my memory when dead, should bear the brand of the infamy you would place upon me. Better, the dank and noisome cell that will slowly poison me by its pestilential vapours, than the one willing word uttered by my

own lips, which would declare me the unworthy son of worthy ancestors--better--oh! a thousand times better, the bitter tears--the sobs of agony, and the groans of fainting horror which your skilful tortures can hourly extort from me in my desolate cell, than the single act which would proclaim that I condescended to abjure, as a criminal, that rank, and that wealth, that are alike mine by right of birth. Base, merciless, and avaricious King, I scorn your offer—I spurn your conditions—I defy you—and I despise you!"

Henry reddened with passion when he heard these words addressed to him by his youthful rival. His first impulse was to place his hand upon his dagger, but he instantly restrained himself, and turning to Lieman said—

"Lieman, I transfer to your care, this young madman. Take with you, thirty of my Worms' guardsmen, and conduct him to the fortress of Eberhard, with special

directions to confine and treat him as *my prisoner*. Away ! and return to me with what speed you can."

Magnus listened to these directions, but spoke not. In a few minutes afterwards, Henry saw him riding out of the encampment under the watchful care of Lieman and his associates, and whilst the detachment and their prisoner was still in sight, Henry was heard muttering these ominous words :

" Insulted by a boy ! scorned by a subject ! defied by a prisoner ! and not feared even as a rival suitor ! And he who did these things is in my power, and has passed a living man from my sight ! Wherefore ? Because there are punishments worse than death : because for Magnus there shall be a terrible punishment. With Saxony defeated : with a Pope of my own—yes, Magnus, you shall live to witness *my* marriage—and seeing that you shall become your own executioner—the agony of grief and of despair shall drive you to suicide, and

thus you shall pass from hell here to hell hereafter. You have defied me. Madman! idiot! you know not what awaits you. Could you but surmise it, you would seek death in the first precipice that lies at your feet."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE KING AND THE PILGRIM.

THE meditation of Henry was interrupted by the gallant Duke of Lorraine—Godfrey the hump-backed—who rode up at the head of a body of horsemen, and thus addressed him :

“ Whilst exploring the environs of your Majesty’s camp I discovered a pilgrim approaching it, and upon questioning him he assures me that he is the bearer of a special message to King Henry, from Otho, Duke

of Bavaria. I have brought him with me for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is your Majesty's desire that he should be admitted to your presence."

"A special message from Otho to me," said Henry. "I wonder what can be its purport. May not this pilgrim be a spy, who seeks to learn for his Saxon countrymen what are the numbers under my command, and what the strength of my position?"

"He is neither Frank, nor Saxon, I know by his tongue," replied Godfrey. "We came upon him by surprise, and when he manifestly had not the slightest idea he was so close to the royal camp. I have taken care to conduct him blindfolded from the place where I arrested him to this spot. He can therefore bring back with him no information either as to your encampment, or your army. Is it your Majesty's will that he should speak with you?"

"It is," replied Henry. "Bring him forward."

The Pilgrim, with whose conduct and bravery the reader is already acquainted, was here led forth from the midst of the soldiers of Godfrey. The cowl that concealed his features was strongly bandaged, and it was plain from the unsteady gait with which he walked, that his eyes were in utter darkness—in fact that the bandage merely permitted him to breathe.

“ Come, sirrah !” said Henry, “ you are now in presence of the King. What have you to say to him ?”

“ The voice that addresses me is that of one in authority,” replied the Pilgrim ; “ but any varlet can assume a tone of insolence, and thus impose himself upon the ignorant as a man of consequence. My message is to the King alone. I must see him, to be sure that I have not delivered my message to any individual who may, perchance, alike be an enemy to King Henry and Duke Otho, and therefore desirous to perpetuate the existing feud between them.”

“ You speak cunningly, sir,” answered Henry. “ Far more like a wicked spy than a holy penitent. What is your proof that you are what you pretend to be—a pilgrim ?”

“ My proof is here,” said the Pilgrim, producing from the folds of his dress a parchment, which bore the seal of the monastery of Font-Avellano, and was adorned with the signature of Peter Damian.

From the Pilgrim this parchment was taken, and placed in the hands of the King, who read aloud its contents :

“ I, Peter Damian, to our holy and apostolic and venerable Fathers in Christ, and to all kings, bishops, abbots, priests, and clerks in every nation of Christendom, who devote themselves to the service of their Creator, in monasteries, in cities, in villages, or in hamlets. Be it known to you, that this our brother, John of Soriano, and your servant, has obtained permission

from us to proceed on a pilgrimage to the Church of St. Peter your father, and to other churches, to pray for his soul's sake, for yours, and for ours. Therefore do we address this to you, begging that you will, for the love of God, and of St. Peter, give him hospitable treatment, aiding, consoling, and comforting him—affording to him free ingress, egress, and regress, so that he may in safety return to us ; and for so doing may a fitting reward be bestowed on you at the last day, by Him who lives and reigns for ever !”

Henry, upon reading this document—a document such as was common enough in the dark ages, and from which the modern system of passports seems to have been derived—turned to the soldiers who guarded the Pilgrim, and said :

“ Unloose the bandages from his eyes, in order that we may ascertain what is the message of which the sturdy Pilgrim has ventured to be the bearer.”

The bandage was unloosed, and the moment that it was, the Pilgrim, as if dazzled by the sudden rush of light upon his eyeballs, gazed apparently wildly, but still clearly, distinctly, and steadily on all sides around him, so that with his practised vision, as a veteran general, he comprehended fully the nature and strength of the hostile force that was arrayed under the orders of the King. He then looked at the group of dukes, counts, and prelates that were on horseback, or on foot about King Henry, and he scanned with an eager glance the features of each, as if he were seeking to recognise the face of one who was well known to him. As he completed his search, he thus communed with himself :

“ *He* is not here, and yet *here* I fancied I was sure to find *him*. But—alas! for the Saxons, if I cannot return to them before their proximity to this tremendous army is discovered. They fancy the King to be a day’s march from them, and yet,

a few hours will suffice to move this force against them. If they are discovered in their present position, they are inevitably destroyed."

"Wherefore, Sir Pilgrim," said the Duke Godfrey, "do you not deliver to the King the message of which you told me you were the bearer when I arrested you?"

"A king is but a man," said the Pilgrim, "and not to be known from his fellows until *they* place a crown upon his head. If I saw an individual here wearing a crown, I should address him as the King. Instead of that, I only look upon an assemblage of men clothed in steel, or muffled in sacerdotal robes. How am I to recognise then your King, when Heaven has not formed him of other materials than the meanest hind in the Saxon army that has hammered his sickle into a sword?"

"Then wherefore wish to have your eyes unbandaged if they are of no avail to

you in recognizing the King ?" asked Duke Godfrey.

" Because," answered the Pilgrim, " I could then see who it was who had addressed me as the King, and I might thus detect, by the bearing of others towards him, whether he was or was not the monarch to whom my words should be addressed. A King, who cannot command the obedience of his subjects, is like a shepherd without a flock—a name, and not a fact—a thing of pretence, and not of substance."

" Speak, Sirrah !" said Henry, irritated by the words, and the resolute bearing of the Pilgrim.

" Ah !" ejaculated the Pilgrim, smiling, " that is the same voice which addressed me when my eyes were darkened ; and now that I do look at your Majesty, I readily admit, that you have been endowed by nature with all the personal attractions that should adorn a king. If Heaven has been as bountiful to you with its graces, you ought to be the best of Kings."

“I dislike your compliments as much as your observations,” said Henry, who felt vexed at the tone of equality which the Pilgrim assumed in addressing him. “Speak out at once your message. I have no disposition to converse with you.”

“Nor I,” answered the Pilgrim, “needlessly to intrude upon your Majesty’s time. But yet, as I know not in what spirit my words, being the words of Otho, may be received by you, before I give utterance to them, I claim for myself the immunity of a Herald, for such is the office I am about to discharge. I claim, from your Majesty, the pledge of your royal word, that whether you send an answer to Otho, or deign to give him no answer, yet, that I, having discharged myself of my mission, shall be free to leave your encampment, and to depart, unmolested, whithersoever I may desire. Until I have this promise, I cannot deliver my message. Duke Godfrey, who is well acquainted with the usages of war, will, I am certain, testify

that I only make in this a demand which I am fully entitled to have conceded to me."

"You speak truly, Sir Pilgrim," remarked Godfrey, the hump-backed. "What you ask is so clearly your right, that I promise you, in the King's name, that it shall be granted to you."

"I thank you, Duke Godfrey," observed the Pilgrim; "had I to treat alone with you, I should exact no such promise; but if fame speak truly, His Majesty is afflicted with a memory so very defective, that he is not only apt to forget what his friends promise for him, but even what he himself promises, unless it be spoken in the presence of so many persons, that their recollection cannot fail to remind him of a fact that otherwise might be forgotten. Hence it is that I cannot now be content with your declaration—I must have the royal word pledged, before all here, to my complete impunity in this encampment, and to my perfect safety in departing from it."

“This varlet is a word-weighing, sentence-splitting jurist, and not a pilgrim,” observed Henry. “You have assumed, sirrah, the office of herald, and I concede to you its immunities. I pledge my word now publicly, and in the presence of all who hear me, that, be the purport of your message pleasing or ungrateful to my ears, you shall be safe in life and limb whilst in this encampment, and in departing from it.”

“I am content,” replied the Pilgrim.

“Mark well, Werenher,” whispered Henry to his favourite minister, “I have made him no promise as to the time I may choose to detain him here.”

“His Majesty waits,” said Duke Godfrey, “to hear what you have to state to him on behalf of Duke Otho.”

“This,” continued the Pilgrim, addressing himself to Henry, “is the message that Duke Otho bids me bring to Your Majesty. The Duke Otho has heard that his nephew,

Magnus Duke of Saxony, has fallen into the hands of one of Your Majesty's officers. He is desirous of rescuing his relation, the head of his illustrious house, from thraldom, and therefore he bids me say to you, that he is ready to exhaust his own treasury, and to alienate the greater portion of his estates to procure the ransom of Magnus. All he desires is that Your Majesty may name some settled sum ; and he authorises me to say that, the moment Duke Magnus is made free, it shall be paid to you."

"Is this," said Henry, "all that Duke Otho bade you to say to me?"

"No—it is not all," replied the Pilgrim ; "but if this offer be accepted, it is all that is necessary for me to say. What else I have to add is contingent upon your refusal."

"Then, Sir Pilgrim," said Henry, "regard that offer as refused. What else hath Otho to offer me, more precious than the red gold, and the rich lands of Bavaria ?

“That,” answered the Pilgrim, “which every man who hears me will esteem more precious than gold, more valuable than land—that which comprises the most rare gifts that the Creator can bestow upon the creature—virtue, valour, genius, wisdom and generosity—for all those qualities are combined in the person of Duke Otho.”

“What mean you?” asked the King. “Speak plainly, for I do not like to be talked to in riddles.”

“This then is the message of Duke Otho to Your Majesty,” said the Pilgrim. “He bids me, in case that Your Majesty should refuse any money-ransom for your noble and youthful prisoner, to remind you that the common ancestors of himself and of Magnus willingly shed their blood in the wars of your royal predecessors—that their lives were sacrificed in founding that old German empire of which your Majesty is now the head—that he himself, as well as the father of Magnus, were amongst the tried and most trusted friends of the late

emperor—he bids you to bear those circumstances in mind, when he tenders to you, as I now in his name do make that tender, to yield himself a prisoner to your Majesty, in exchange for Duke Magnus, and that provided you give to Magnus his liberty, he will submit himself to your Majesty's pleasure, to be held by you in chains and captivity as long as you desire so to retain him, even though it should be for his whole life ; and that you should even dispose of all his personal property in whatsoever manner you please—all this he is willing to do, that he may save his youthful relation from the wasting agony of a prolonged imprisonment. This is the message of Duke Otho. Does your Majesty deign to send a reply to it ?”

“Brave Otho ! truly magnanimous Duke,” exclaimed Godfrey. “These are the words of a hero. They are more fitting in the lips of an ancient Roman, than of a barbarous Saxon.”

The exclamation of the gallant Godfrey

was not unheard by Henry, and it seemed to foment the rage that was gathering in his heart, and to give additional fire to the passions that now possessed him.

“ Audacious and insolent traitor !” exclaimed Henry. “ Otho—the slave whom you, sirrah, presume to call Duke of Bavaria, is now a Duke no longer. Placed under the ban of the Empire—houseless, homeless, landless—the associate of robbers, of vagabonds, and of murderers—he who lives by rapine, and whose only chance of safety is in flying as a fugitive from before my soldiers—he, on whose head I have placed a price, and who if arrested shall die the death of a slave—he presumes to send a message to me, tendering himself as a prisoner, and thus seeking to extort my mercy—mercy that shall not be shown to him, once he becomes my captive—he, who by his cowardice in shrinking from single combat, admits that he plotted against my life, and who is in a worse condition than

the meanest beggar, tenders gold that he has not, and lands of which he has been deprived, as a ransom for his nephew! Audacious and beggarly boaster, my only answer to his insolent message is this—that he shall be doomed to bear not even a dog, but an ass's saddle to the place of his execution ; that his death shall be that which the Hessians inflict on their criminals, he shall be staked alive, and when dead, the flesh that covers his traitorous breast shall be given to feed my hawks. This is my answer—the only answer worthy of a King to send to an assassin in intention, and a traitor in fact.”

So ungracious and so cruel a reply as this to the generous offer of Otho, filled the minds of most of the gallant men who heard it, with indignation and disgust. A murmur of discontent filled the ear of Henry, who became pale with passion as the unwonted sound reached him. He was enraged to perceive how vast was the

difference between those who came from a sense of duty, in arms to assist him, and that cringing band of parasites and courtiers, in whose society most of his time had hitherto been wasted. He felt that he was in an embarrassing position, and knew not how to reconcile his interest, in not offending the German princes and prelates, and yet gratifying his hatred, and giving vent to his revenge.

From this embarrassment an unlooked-for incident rescued the King.

“News! news! most joyful news!” exclaimed Rudolph, Duke of Swabia, riding up to the King. “I have discovered the Saxon army.”

“Alas! alas!” groaned the Pilgrim—“then all his lost.”

“The Saxon army!” said Henry, in surprise—“I fanced that we must be distant from them at least three days’ march.”

“We are not so many hours’ march

apart from them," answered Rudolph. "They are now encamped at Langensalza, on the banks of the Unstrutt, and so little idea have they that they, are within a few miles of your Majesty's forces, that even their camp is unguarded. My soldiers, who have approached close up to their lines undiscovered, or, if observed, unattended to by them, report, that they are now solely occupied with feasting, carousing, and rural sports. There is not a man amongst them, that has got on his armour, but they are all like holiday folk in the midst of a peaceful and friendly country. If we wish to destroy them utterly, every practised soldier in this camp will tell your Majesty that this is a moment for making an attack upon them. Give them not an instant to prepare for battle, and you force them to fight with such disadvantage, that their defeat is certain, or, if they have time to retreat in safety to their camp, their entrenchments can be no protection to those who have once been seized with a panic fear."

Henry's heart bounded with joy at this unexpected intelligence. He instantly flung himself from his horse, and casting himself on his knees, said aloud :

“I thank my God for these joyful tidings ; and I now say, in the presence of Heaven, and of man, that I shall ever be grateful, as to my best and truest of friends, to Rudolph, Duke of Swabia, for bringing to me this news, Rudolph, demand from me what thou wilt, it is thine, before it is asked for.”

“The only favour I have to ask,” answered Rudolph, “is that I may be permitted, on this occasion, to exercise that which is the peculiar privilege of the Swabian soldiery—that privilege which law and custom both have sanctioned—namely, that in every warlike expedition, headed by a German King, the Swabians shall lead the van ; be the first to encounter the foe ; and the first to shed their blood for their sovereign and their country. This is the favour I now ask of your

Majesty. Permit me, on this instant, to march with my forces. Let the others, with what speed they may, follow and support me in my onset, for we have to do with a dauntless race of men."

"Brave Rudolph, the privilege you seek is conceded to you," said Henry, embracing the Duke of Swabia. "The advice you give shall be followed. Holloa! let the trumpets sound forth the charge to battle field, and victory. Now—death to the Saxons—to battle—to battle—every man who can handle a sword, and who loves his King."

As Henry spoke these words, and his brilliant eyes flashed with martial fire, a frown overcast his face, for he perceived the Pilgrim standing by his side.

"As to you, meddling, prating pilgrim—I cannot let you depart. Werenher, look to this man. To you I confide the care of the camp. See that this pilgrim does not pass the entrenchments until an hour after the last of our soldiers has de-

parted. I will have no spy to speed with the intelligence to the Saxons, that they are on the point of being attacked by my army."

"Is it thus, King Henry, that you redeem the promise you gave me?" said the Pilgrim, scornfully regarding Henry.

"What I promised, I mean to perform—I repeat the words of my promise," said Henry, laughing derisively at the Pilgrim. "I said—'*you shall be safe in my encampment, and in departing from it.*' That I said—that I mean to do, and no more. I did not promise to give you permission to depart when you had disburdened yourself of your insolent message. I appeal," added Henry, triumphantly, "to Duke Godfrey, if I am not justified in refusing to do more than I promised."

"I am glad that you have appealed to him," answered the Pilgrim, "for I am prepared to abide by his decision: I am sure it will be that of a candid man, a

righteous judge, and a brave warrior. It is not fitting that a great King should shuffle in his dealings with the poor. I now then, with your Majesty, appeal to Duke Godfrey, if a promise is not to be understood in the terms in which it is demanded, rather than in the words in which it is supposed to be conceded ; and so appealing to his judgment, I also appeal to his memory, if the terms in which I couched the required promise were not these—‘*that I, having disengaged myself of my mission, shall be free to leave your encampment, and to depart, unmolested, whithersoever I may desire.*’”

“Upon both points, Sir Pilgrim,” said Duke Godfrey, “I am bound to say that right is with you, and not with his Majesty. As you have expressed your demand, so I understood it ; and I conceived that the promise given by King Henry, was in compliance with that demand, although his words, if literally interpreted, do not express it. I consider then, that, rightfully,

you cannot be detained here a moment longer than you choose to remain. However, Sir Pilgrim, I need not tell one of your experience, that having obtained access to this camp upon a pretence, or for an object that has now proved fruitless, and whilst here, have gained information, not otherwise accessible to you, and that you be found hereafter in the society of the enemy to whom you may have communicated that information, you are liable to be punished as a spy."

"I thank you for the warning, Duke Godfrey," said the Pilgrim; "but in my case it is unnecessary. You see I am on foot—the enemies of the Saxons are this moment speeding towards them on horseback. Even if I desired it, I could never reach Langensalza as soon as the Swabian cavalry. I am about to travel in a far different direction." And as he spoke these words, the Pilgrim pointed to the side of the camp, which was first approached that morning by Diedrich and his prisoner.

Magnus. “I cannot aid, by any warning, the Saxons at Langensalza, and I desire to go whither my presence may be an advantage, and not a useless incumbrance.”

“Go—go—incessant babbler, that you are,” said Henry, impatiently. “Go—but first thank the good Duke Godfrey for his *wise* decision,” added the King, with a sneer.

“I thank God,” said the Pilgrim, “that I have found one just man in the camp of King Henry.”

The Pilgrim turned away, and as he did so, said—

“Now, for Erzegebirge—now, if it be possible to see that which has been so long looked for—prayed for—and sought for in vain.”

The postern of the camp through which the Pilgrim passed, was guarded but by a few sentinels. It appeared lone and deserted, even though there came to it now and again the sound of the braying of trumpets—

the neighing of steeds, and the shouts of men, as detachment after detachment poured out of the encampment from the opposite side, and all marching in the one direction towards the fatal and long-famed field of Langensalza.

END OF VOL. II.

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